

CHRIST-CENTERED WORSHIP:
DEVELOPING A MOTIF
FOR PREACHING EXPOSITORY SERMONS
IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION BEYOND CHAPTER THREE

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THOMAS DOMBROWSKI

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife Sandra, who willingly gave of her time,
talents and our treasure to see this project completed.

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ABSTRACT

This project examines if expository preaching in the book of Revelation takes place beyond chapters two and three. A survey was given to students from two of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry tracks with an emphasis in preaching to research this question. Although the survey results indicated a significant number of preachers do preach beyond chapters two and three some chapters are given more emphasis than others. Using this data this project demonstrates how an expository sermon series in the book of Revelation beyond chapter three can be developed based on the motif of Christ-centered worship.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Identification of the Problem

If someone should ever do a study of American pop culture literature at the dawn of the twenty-first century they would discover one of the greatest phenomenon in publishing history—the *Left Behind* book series.¹ To some degree this series has made the book of Revelation more intriguing then ever for the average American. But if this is true, it may be easier to find this fictional book series based on the book of Revelation at your corner drug store then it is to hear a sermon preached from Revelation in a church pulpit. The reason being—preaching Revelation can be difficult. And some chapters are more difficult then others. As a result not every chapter gets equal attention. New Testament scholar J. Ramsey Michaels observes, “Most ministers who preach from the Revelation at all tend to confine themselves to the first three chapters.”² To validate this point I asked a pastoral colleague if he ever preached from Revelation. He responded, “Only on the passages about the seven churches.”³ His response affirms this simple truth—certain portions of Revelation receive a greater emphasis then others.

¹ This series has sold over 65 million books. Available from [http://www.en.wikipedia.org/Wiki/Left_Behind_\(series\)](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/Wiki/Left_Behind_(series)); Under subheading “Response”; Internet accessed March 26, 2008.

² J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 40.

³ While my colleague’s answer does not expose an entire trend it does affirm the need to encourage expository preaching beyond Revelation chapter three.

The Nature of the Problem

To understand the nature of the problem I have identified three reasons to help understand why preachers are reluctant to preach beyond Revelation chapter three. First, John uses a variety of literary genres throughout the book. Chapter one identifies the book as a prophecy but reads more like a combination of epistle and apocalyptic narrative. Chapters two and three remain exclusively epistle in their genre. Chapter four and beyond relies heavily on apocalyptic, and prophecy with the exception of the epilogue, which has an epistle-like conclusion. Gordon D. Fee describes Revelation as “a unique, finely blended combination of three distinct literary types: apocalypse, prophecy, and letter.”⁴ If the preacher wants to preach beyond Revelation chapter three he must be able to work with the literary genres unique to this part of the book.

The second problem springs from the first. Because Revelation is part apocalyptic the book uses symbols to help communicate its message. This naturally raises the question of interpretation. A student pastor finishing up his undergraduate degree in theology was taking a class on Revelation. I asked him what he found most challenging about preaching from Revelation. He said: “The symbols,” adding further, “How do you know when they’re literal or symbolic?” New Testament Scholar Fee concurs, “Most of the problems stem from the symbols.”⁵ Preparing sermons from beyond Revelation chapter three puts the preacher in a territory where a great portion of the symbols in the book are found.

⁴ Gordon D. Fee, Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 232.

⁵ Ibid., 231.

A third problem for the preacher of Revelation is the book's literary structure. My earliest encounters with the book of Revelation left me wondering how chapters two and three were connected to the rest of the book. Only later did I come to recognize the genius of the book lies in part to how John develops Revelation's message through the book's literary structure. Hans K. LaRondelle observes, "The Apocalypse contains a detailed architectural design in its literary construction, which until recently has been overlooked."⁶ For a preacher to go beyond chapter three a study of the book's complete structure is absolutely necessary.

Reasons may vary from preacher to preacher as to why some portions of Revelation receive a greater emphasis in the pulpit than others. And while the three reasons given are not exhaustive, they illustrate what makes preaching beyond Revelation chapter three difficult.

The Importance of this Study

This study is important for the following three reasons. First, this project is important because the book of Revelation promises a blessing to its audience. In his prologue John writes, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near."⁷ The blessing John spoke of for his audience is still available for God's people today. Preachers have the unique opportunity to call people's attention to the scope of the

⁶ Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 99.

⁷ Revelation 1:2, New King James Version. All Bible verses quoted in this project will be from the NKJV unless specified otherwise.

book so the entire church—both laity and clergy can receive the full blessing offered in Revelation. But this blessing will not be received by the church unless her preachers are willing to preach beyond Revelation chapter three.

Second, expository preaching needs to be Christ-centered. From John's opening phrase, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ,"⁸ to the last promise in the book's prologue, "Surely I am coming quickly"⁹ Revelation offers preachers the extraordinary opportunity to present Christ-centered messages. However, if preaching is only limited to one portion of the book then the portrait of Jesus Christ remains incomplete.

Finally, there are several themes contained within Revelation. One of the themes found beyond chapter three is the theme of worship. Twenty-three of the 24 appearances of the word worship or its derivative in Revelation occur beyond chapter three. If the church is to understand what Revelation has to say about worship then preachers must be willing to preach beyond chapter three.

The Contribution of this Study

There is an abundance of resources on the book of Revelation. These works include commentaries, theological reflections, and exegetical handbooks. In spite of this great quantity of literature on Revelation, there are few if any works on how to develop expository sermons in Revelation. The contribution of this study will be to

⁸ Scholars debate how to interpret Αποκάλυψις Ἰησού Χριστοῦ ("revelation of Jesus Christ"). The phrase can be rendered as a subjective genitive, being that God gave the revelation to Jesus; or as an objective genitive meaning the revelation about Jesus. Because of the immediate context many scholars often render Rev 1:1 as a subjective genitive. However, because of Revelation's great emphasis on the work of Jesus Christ it can be interpreted as both.

⁹ Revelation 22:20.

create a tool that will guide preachers who are committed to doing expository preaching. This tool will demonstrate the process for developing expository sermons on the theme of Christ-centered worship in Revelation beyond chapter three.

The Nature of this Study

The nature of this study consists of four parts. First, in chapter two I will examine Bible commentaries, and other resources that focus on the content of Revelation to identify the worship theme in Revelation. I will also review literature on hermeneutics, exegesis, and sermon construction in Revelation to identify what materials are available for preparing expository sermons in the book of Revelation. Chapter three presents the theological reasons for doing expository sermons on the theme of Christ-centered worship beyond Revelation chapter three. Chapter four is the results of a survey conducted on pastors enrolled at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary¹⁰ identifying their habits when doing expository preaching in the book of Revelation. Chapter five is a tool for evangelical preachers demonstrating how an expository sermon series on the theme of Christ-centered worship in the book of Revelation beyond chapter three can be developed.

Summary

For a spiritual transformation to occur in the preacher and their congregation the whole counsel of God must be preached. Applying this thought to the book of

¹⁰ This survey was conducted only on Doctor of Ministry students enrolled in the *Preacher and the Message* and *Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible* track. This survey included all the graduates of these tracks and all students enrolled at the time of the survey.

Revelation means that preachers must take their congregations beyond chapters two and three. This is the work of the expository preacher. While this study does not claim Christ-centered worship is the only theme in Revelation it is clearly one the expository preacher cannot ignore.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I review literature relevant to preaching expository sermons on the theme of Christ-centered worship in the book of Revelation beyond chapter three.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, I examine literature that identifies the worship theme in Revelation. In section two I review literature on hermeneutics, exegesis, and sermon construction in Revelation. The chapter concludes with a summary of the literature review.

The Review of the Content Literature

The literature available addressing the content of Revelation grows annually. Because of the large volume of commentaries in this area, I limited selections to ones from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I also include books, articles, and audio-visual material. The works reviewed are grouped according to how each author has understood, defined or explained worship in Revelation.

The first seven reviews consist of commentaries, articles, DVD, and books on Revelation. Each of these reviews draws from the author their particular understanding of the worship theme found in Revelation.

In his commentary, Robert W. Wall summarizes Revelation's purpose as, "*to encourage the whole community of faith to focus its faith and life on the triumph of a sovereign God's reign which has now been disclosed through the exaltation of God's Christ*" [Wall's emphasis].¹¹ Wall correctly identifies the necessity for this

¹¹ Robert W. Wall, *Revelation*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 39.

encouragement due primarily to the challenge facing the church sparked by the culture of its day. This challenge is over worship and who is deserving of it—either Christ or Satan.

In his summary of Revelation, Gregory K. Beale¹² says, “*the sovereignty of God and Christ in redeeming and judging brings them glory; which is intended to motivate saints to worship God and reflect his glorious attributes through obedience to his word*” [Beale’s emphasis].¹³ Beale identifies salvation provided by Christ as the catalyst for bringing worship to the front of Revelation’s drama.

In a DVD recording of his lecture titled, *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, Samuele Bacchiocchi provides an analysis and interpretation of Revelation 13:17-18. In his lecture Bacchiocchi asks the question: “What is the central theme of Revelation?”¹⁴ His answer? Worship.¹⁵ This answer is based on his research into the historical, cultural and literary structure of Revelation. He stresses the need to understand the overall theme of the book in order to interpret Revelation 13:17-18 accurately.

In his article, *Worship in the Book of Revelation*, C. Raymond Holmes examines the emphasis of Theo centric worship found in Revelation.¹⁶ Although he discusses several passages, he identifies this theme with unmistakable certainty in

¹² Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub., 1999).

¹³ Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 174.

¹⁴ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, [DVD] (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2006), Disk 1.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ C. Raymond Holmes, “Worship in the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 8 no. 1, 2 (spring, autumn 1997): 5.

Revelation 14:6-7.¹⁷ Holmes writes, “This call to worship is a purely Theo centric call. There is no trace of anthropocentricity. It is God who is to be feared, not man. It is God to whom glory is to be given, not man. It is God who is to be worshiped, not man.”¹⁸ Holmes recognizes the value the book of Revelation has for re-directing the church’s anthropocentric worship orientation to one that is Theo centric.¹⁹

Eugene H. Peterson’s book *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination*, is a collection of exploratory essays on various themes within Revelation. His essay on worship, based on Revelation chapters four and five, attempts to direct the attention of the modern church to what the central focus should be in its worship experience. Peterson writes, “This second Lord’s Day vision shows the entire reality of worship, our response to the revelation of Christ.”²⁰ Peterson sees his work not as a verse-by-verse commentary but rather a journey into a subject formed by the combined poetry and theology of John of Patmos.²¹

The Theology of the Book of Revelation, by Richard Bauckham, is a significant contribution to Revelations’ study by providing a more expanded understanding of its theology not often found in Bible commentaries. Bauckham sees the theme of worship rising continually throughout Revelation. He writes, “Every stage of God’s victory – through chapters 7-19 – is accompanied by worship in

¹⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸ Ibid., 10.

¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

²⁰ Eugene H. Peterson, *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John & the Praying Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988), 59.

²¹ Ibid., xii.

heaven.”²² With this observation he concludes, “In the end, the book is about the incompatibility of the exclusive monotheistic worship portrayed in chapter 4 with every kind of idolatry – the political, social and economic idolatries from which more narrowly religious idolatry is inseparable.”²³ In his presentation of Revelation’s theology Bauckham identifies the clash of loyalties first century Christians experienced between faith and culture exhibited at the altar of worship.

The work of Merrill C. Tenney’s *Interpreting Revelation*, examines the various facets of Revelation’s composition. Tenney’s observations on Revelation lead him to write, “Worship is one of its strongest emphases.”²⁴ Considering this theme, Tenney says, “The implication of the book is that worship is a token of the genuineness of spiritual life now. The contrast between the saved and the lost in Revelation could be called a contrast in worship, since the latter worship the beast (13:4, 8 12, 15).”²⁵ According to Tenney, worship is seen as the expression of a sincere faith in God by Christians in a culture where idolatry stands in direct opposition to the mission of the church.

Where the first seven reviews emphasize the worship theme in Revelation, the next four identify how the language in Revelation communicates the call to worship.

Songs of Heaven, a devotional written by Robert E. Coleman, originated with his study of the fourteen song passages in Revelation. Each chapter reflects on the

²² Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 12th ed., ed. James D. G. Dunn, New Testament Theology (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 35.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub., 1962), 199.

²⁵ Ibid., 200.

meaning of that passage in the context of worship. While Coleman's intention is to draw the reader into a deeper reflection on worship he notes how regardless of what interpretive template is used to understand Revelation the song passages transcend these approaches. As a result, Coleman sees the songs throughout the book as "the primary unifying element in the narrative."²⁶ The unifying element identified by Coleman is the worship of God and the Lamb.

In the introduction to volume one of his commentary, David E. Aune addresses the matter of literary structure in Revelation and how it underscores the worship theme. He does this by noting how John employs "a plethora of literary devices linking the various parts of the text together"²⁷ in order to create unison within the document. This unity emerges in part by a careful attention to language, including "language of worship."²⁸ John's skillful use of language directs his audience to Revelation's overall message—Christ-centered worship.

While Aune describes how the language of worship unites the book of Revelation, David L. Barr wrote in his commentary how John's use of this same language develops the message of worship within the book. For example, through John's creative use of language in chapter four, he invites comparison²⁹ to the emperor's court in Rome demonstrating why God alone is worthy of worship as

²⁶ Robert E. Coleman, *Songs of Heaven* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1980), 22.

²⁷ David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, Word Bible Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), cviii.

²⁸ Ibid., cix.

²⁹ David L. Barr, *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1998), 63.

opposed to any earthly government. Using this and other scenes within the book John clarifies the theme of Christ-centered worship in the book of Revelation.³⁰

In her book, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza describes Revelation's message as one that demands a life or death decision. She claims that to help his readers make this decision for life John uses "ever new images and symbols of redemption and salvation ... to persuade the audience to decide for the worship of God and against that of the beast."³¹ The literary devices repeatedly used by John clearly demonstrate how fundamental the worship of God and His Christ is to the overall message of Revelation because of God's salvation through Jesus Christ.

Whereas the previous reviews identified worship as a theme and how this theme is communicated through the language John uses, the last six commentaries provide critical background to inform us why the language of Revelation was so dramatic, with its special emphasis on the worship theme.

In his commentary, Leonard L. Thompson, sees John writing Revelation through a careful analysis of the needs of God's people living in a society that challenges their loyalty to God, expressed primarily through worship. Thompson writes, "Christians gave the appearance of not supporting the public order,"³² because they didn't participate in emperor worship.³³ With his letter, John challenges the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1998), 192.

³² Leonard L. Thompson, *Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 28.

³³ Ibid.

church to remain faithful in theocentric worship in spite of this pressure to indulge in anthropocentric worship by the Roman culture of his day.³⁴

Ranko Stefanovic's *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, reinforces what previous commentators have written about the clash between the church and its surrounding culture. His introduction attempts to detail their primary origins. Stefanovic explains, "Christians were accused of atheism for worshiping only their God (whoever did not worship the emperor was considered an atheist by the Romans)."³⁵ Christians were considered an oddity for worshipping an invisible God in a culture with numerous idols and temples. In addition to the threat of emperor worship was the friction Christians experienced in the daily life of their community on the following two points: food offered to idols and sexual immorality.³⁶ Both activities were part of the pagan temple service Christians were pressured to participate in. The meat offered to idols would often include extensive feasts leading to "drunkenness and immoral behavior."³⁷ John's counsel was that it was better not to participate. The sexual immorality sprang from the practice of cultic temple prostitution. Stefanovic notes this practice was for "for the fertility of the land and the prosperity of society."³⁸ The pressure was felt by Christians because by

³⁴ Ibid., 30.

³⁵ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 6.

³⁶ Ibid., 7.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

participating, one could achieve economic, political, or social status in society.³⁹

Stefanovic's work addresses the question faced by the first-century church over how much participation a Christian should have with the culture before they compromise their faith in God.

With this conflict looming on the horizon we now understand more clearly John's purpose for writing Revelation. It was, as R. H. Charles puts it, "to encourage the faithful,"⁴⁰ to resist "the blasphemous claims of the State."⁴¹ Revelation was a word of hope to those standing on center stage in this cosmic conflict over whom to worship.

While previous authors recognize the clash between church and culture in the form of worship, Henry B. Swete's commentary identifies John's prophetic insight in this struggle. He writes, "the Beast from the sea sets up his image, and the Beast from the land compels men under pain of outlawry or death to worship it."⁴² He concludes that John is seeing a titanic struggle developing between church and state. Because of this state-enforced worship "the prophet John sees clearly that an age of persecution is beginning, and that it will affect not only the Churches of Asia, but the Church throughout the Roman world."⁴³ The spotlight Swete places on John's prophetic ministry clarifies how serious the challenge facing the church was.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, 2 vols. International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920), xxii.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1908), xcvi.

⁴³ Ibid.

G. R. Beasley-Murray takes a deeper look into state enforced worship in John's day. In his commentary he first defines it as "the cult of the emperor."⁴⁴ His details note to what height this blasphemous claim was carried adding, "It was under Domitian, who claimed and frequently used the title *Dominus et Deus noster* ('our Lord and God') [Beasley-Murray's emphasis]."⁴⁵ This historical insight allows us to see how state-sponsored worship throughout the empire cast a much darker shadow over the church than any anticipated.

The research in Robert H. Mounce's revised commentary underscores the urgency of John's message. The following observation by Mounce over state-enforced worship demonstrates John's ability to assess the social condition the church lived under and project what this would look like on a global scale. "While the picture of universal enforcement of the imperial cult given in Revelation 13 is a forecast rather than a descriptive account of the conditions under Domitian, all the elements were present in the final decade of the first century from which a reasonable projection could be made."⁴⁶ Mounce describes what John foresees—a universal decree of emperor worship.

The last review provides a fitting conclusion for section one regarding the influence of the historical background to the theme of worship found in Revelation.

In 1984 Adela Yarbro Collins wrote *Crisis & Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse*. This was a welcome addition to the existing works on the Apocalypse

⁴⁴ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (London: Oliphants, 1974), 38.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 16-17.

because of its in-depth analysis of the historical, literary, and psychological background of the text not always found in commentaries. Like previous authors, Collins accepts the existence of emperor worship within the empire. In her work she attempts to understand more clearly the impact emperor worship had on Revelation's composition. Collins admits, the presence of this particular social phenomenon does not fully explain why Revelation was written.⁴⁷ But while other social factors may have contributed to John's composition it was the threat of emperor worship that was the biggest catalyst. Collins writes: "But if the imperial ruler cult had seriously waned in John's region at his time, his book would look very different, if it would have been written at all."⁴⁸ Essentially, if the circumstances in which John wrote were different, then the theme of worship would not dominate the horizon of the Apocalypse.

The Review of Methodology Literature

The literature reviewed in this subdivision focuses on the methodology of preparing expository sermons on Christ-centered worship in the book of Revelation beyond chapter three. This literature includes hermeneutical, exegetical, and other works related to preparing sermons in Revelation as well as actual sermons related to this field of study.

The next nine reviews are based either on specific books on how to study Revelation or books with chapters on the study of apocalyptic literature of the Bible

⁴⁷ Adela Yarbro Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 104, 105.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

and how their principles apply to the book of Revelation. The review of this material contributes to a better understanding of the thesis problem by exposing some of the basic hermeneutical guidelines necessary for preparing sermons in the book of Revelation.

A very popular work, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, provides hermeneutical principles to reading and understanding the variety of literary genres found in the Bible. When addressing Revelation, Fee writes, “The first key to the exegesis of the Revelation is to examine the *kind* of literature it is [Fee’s emphasis].”⁴⁹ Second, Fee argues for sound exegesis. His reasoning is that only sound exegesis can avoid the pitfalls of “bad, speculative interpretation of the Revelation.”⁵⁰ Fee does not clarify in his chapter in defining what sound exegesis is, but his point overlaps with Paulien in seeing what emerges from the text. Third, Fee points out how the “concept of the analogy of scripture”⁵¹ is to be used in exegeting Revelation. Fee’s final proposal urges the student to remain open to the possibility of “secondary meaning, inspired by the Holy Spirit.”⁵² While he cautions that “a secondary meaning lies beyond exegesis in the broader area of hermeneutics,”⁵³ no further explanation is given. Although more details on the subject of secondary meanings would have been helpful, Fee’s work

⁴⁹ Gordon D. Fee, Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 232.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 235.

⁵¹ Ibid., 236.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

focuses on the basic exegetical principles and their application to understanding Revelation.

In *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach*, Jon Paulien contributes the chapter “The Hermeneutics of Biblical Apocalyptic.” In his work he reminds readers of a general principle for interpreting scripture stating, “God meets people where they are.”⁵⁴ Paulien argues for the application of this hermeneutic principle when interpreting Revelation because John initially wrote to a specific audience in his day (Rev. 1:3).⁵⁵ The span of time separating us from John’s original audience makes this principle so necessary for us living in the twenty-first century. Paulien elaborates further by fleshing out three additional hermeneutical principles to apply to interpreting apocalyptic literature. First, “When God reveals Himself, He always speaks in the language of the prophet’s time, place, and circumstances.”⁵⁶ Therefore, whatever conclusion the exegete comes to must not contradict the original intent of the passage. Second, “The purpose of apocalyptic visions is not simply to satisfy human curiosity about the future.”⁵⁷ Apocalyptic is not so much about the future as much as it is about the God who holds the future and His people as well. And while He permits them to undergo the trials the future brings, He has promised to be with them in these trials. This is the God who is revealed in apocalyptic literature. Therefore, Revelation allows us to know God in a more intimate way. Paulien’s third

⁵⁴ Jon Paulien, “The Hermeneutics of Biblical Apocalyptic,” *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 250.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 251.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

point is, “Apocalyptic is people-oriented.”⁵⁸ This goes back to his principle stated earlier that God meets people where they are. Revelation was written to a specific people with a specific street address, be it Ephesus, Symrna, or another city in order to comfort and bring them hope. The book of Revelation still offers that same hope to God’s people today.

What has now become a classic text on doing exegesis for research papers or sermons is *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* by Gordon D. Fee. The advice given by Fee in this handbook is more specific and detailed than his chapter on Revelation in, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. While Fee stresses the need for knowing the literary genre of the book,⁵⁹ his counsel on the apocalyptic images appears most valuable because “the apocalyptic images are often the most difficult items for exegesis.”⁶⁰ The steps he proposes are first, “Determine the source or background of the image.”⁶¹ To study the source or background of the image Fee recommends several Bible commentaries for doing this type of research. Second, “Determine the present use of the image.”⁶² Third, “See the visions as wholes.”⁶³ Let the details support the overall vision rather than trying to figure out what each minor element could mean.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 29.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 30.

In his book, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, J. Ramsey Michaels acknowledges “the need for careful, detailed analysis of its literary structure, its historical and cultural setting, and even the sources of its ideas and language.”⁶⁴ To do this, Michaels presents a twofold challenge to the exegete of Revelation. First, understand Revelation “from the outside”⁶⁵ or the historical and cultural setting in which it was written. Second, interpret Revelation “from the inside,”⁶⁶ examining how the author structured the book. Michaels wants the exegete to pay attention to the literary details while simultaneously having the awareness of the time and place John wrote.

Like Michaels, Kenneth A. Strand acknowledges the benefits of understanding the literary structure of Revelation. Strand, a church historian wrote *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis*. His work emphasizes the importance of understanding the literary form and structure of Revelation in order to better grasp its message. Strand’s argument rests upon the premise, “that literary context is equally significant with historical context for gaining a correct understanding of any ancient document.”⁶⁷ With regards to Revelation, Strand notes the deficiency in this area stating, “As far as the book of Revelation is concerned, a great deal of attention has been given to various historical backgrounds and settings whereas literary context has rarely been given sufficient

⁶⁴ J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, ed. Scott McKnight, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 17.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Kenneth A. Strand, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation: Hermeneutical Guidelines, with Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis* (Worthington, OH: Ann Arbor Pub., 1976), 9.

weight.”⁶⁸ While Strand’s work is not exhaustive it gives a concise introduction to the work of analyzing the literary structure of Revelation for the preacher.

In his article, “Preaching and Apocalyptic Literature” Richard Melick addresses the challenges of preaching this genre. The difficulty he notes is that “Biblical apocalyptic lies embedded within other biblical texts.”⁶⁹ Melick gives an example of this found in the book of Daniel where, “the apocalyptic sections occur embedded in a narrative.” Melick believes this particular literary device was used to teach God’s people they will eventually overcome their captors as the heroes of Daniel’s book overcame their oppressors. He points out a similar pattern in New Testament apocalyptic in the book of Revelation where chapters one to three are in epistle form followed by chapters four through twenty-two in apocalyptic style. Melick writes, “Through the apocalyptic message, the churches were motivated to a more sober understanding of their situations.”⁷⁰ Melick’s insight on this point is useful for those preparing sermons beyond Revelation chapter three, because it lends credence both to the unity of the book in its literary structure and its overall message.

In his article “Ten Keys for Interpreting the Book of Revelation”, Edwin Reynolds offers the Bible student ten guidelines for exegesis in Revelation. These ten keys are identified as: Knowing the genre or type of literature; understanding the purpose of the book; knowing the structure of Revelation; being familiar with the theological themes; being able to distinguish between the symbolic and the literal in

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Richard Melick, “Preaching and Apocalyptic Literature,” *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 384.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

the book; understanding the roots of Revelation in Old Testament theology and prophecy; essential unity of the book; ethical dualism of the book, especially in the Great Controversy theme; the emphasis on the sanctuary theme; and the message of Christ in Revelation as opposed to the schematization of history.⁷¹ Many of these recommendations overlap with other author's such as Craddock, Jeter Jr., Liefeld, Osborne, cited below, and those previously cited such as Aune, Beale, Fee, Melick, Michaels, Mounce, Paulien, and Strand. One example would be the sanctuary motif in Revelation as discussed by Reynolds.⁷² He writes, "Another of the important keys to understanding the book of Revelation is a realization of the extent to which the sanctuary functions as a framework for the work of Christ in our salvation."⁷³ The careful review and application of these principles emphasized by Reynolds will allow the preacher of Revelation to gain a broader understanding of its text and effectively proclaim its message.

Grant R. Osborne, in *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, identifies five principles necessary for preparing sermons on apocalyptic literature. First, "note the type of literature."⁷⁴ Second, Osborne recommends noting the "perspective of the passage."⁷⁵ The third

⁷¹ Edwin Reynolds, "Ten Keys for Interpreting the Book of Revelation," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 11 no. 1 & 2 (spring, autumn 2000): 261.

⁷² Ibid., 271.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 230.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

principle is to “note the structure of the passage or book.”⁷⁶ A fourth principle specific to apocalyptic is to “note the function and meaning of the symbols.”⁷⁷ Osborne tackled this subject previously in another chapter but because of the prevalence of symbols specific to apocalyptic he summarizes his principle with the following three points, “First find out whether the symbol is interpreted in the immediate context or elsewhere in the book.”⁷⁸ Second, study the “synchronic use of the symbols.”⁷⁹ Third, study the “diachronic”⁸⁰ use of the symbols. The final hermeneutical principle given is to “stress the theological and note the predictive with humility.”⁸¹ The principles offered by Osborne provide the guidelines necessary to work with apocalyptic literature. Although many of them can be applied to books of the Bible aside from apocalyptic literature, Osborne’s suggestions are helpful, specifically to understanding the frequent use of symbols found in Revelation.

In his book, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, Graeme Goldsworthy addresses the challenge of preaching the various genres of Bible literature. In chapter fifteen he discusses preaching apocalyptic texts including Revelation. When preaching from Revelation he notes that, “The preacher’s approach will at least in part, if not mainly, be determined by the particular eschatological stance adopted. Thus a dispensationalist will read it one way, a

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 231.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

historical premillennialist another, a postmillennialist another, and an amillennialist in yet another.”⁸² While the preacher’s approach to Revelation may be already made up, their viewpoint should be firmly based on Scripture. In addition, Goldsworthy recognizes the challenge of preaching from the apocalyptic genre, specifically when it relates to communicating the message of the book to your audience, who may either distance themselves from apocalyptic or those who have an insatiable appetite for that genre.⁸³ To provide balance he reminds the preacher stating, “Fortunately, all the biblical texts that could be classified as apocalyptic occur in some wider context that, if we pay attention to it, enables us to relate these texts to the broader sweep of biblical theology and salvation history.”⁸⁴ Goldsworthy’s insight on apocalyptic acknowledges the balance necessary for preaching Revelation to make sure that its message is not overshadowed by the preacher’s pet ideas.

The next four entries go beyond the hermeneutics of preparing sermons in Revelation and focus more closely on examining specific passages in Revelation for the purpose of preaching.

Merrill C. Tenney also wrote, “The Book of Revelation,” in the *Proclaiming the New Testament* series for preaching. Ralph G. Turnbull explains in the editor’s forward, the purpose of the book is “to encourage the preacher to engage in the reading and studying of the book to find the homiletical units.”⁸⁵ Tenney’s analysis

⁸² Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 2000), 215.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Merrill C. Tenney, “The Book of Revelation,” *Proclaiming the New Testament*, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1963), 4.

does not cover entire chapters but focuses on selected verses from chapters throughout Revelation. Tenney has 22 chapters in his book but they do not correspond exactly to Revelation's 22 chapters. In each chapter Tenney provides a brief historical background, in addition to addressing the expository meaning, doctrinal value, and the practical aim of the passage examined. Tenney concludes each chapter with an outline called the homiletical form. He bases this on the passages selected from the chapter but not on what could clearly be defined as a homiletical unit.

Another aid for preaching Revelation is by James L. Blevins in the *Knox Preaching Guides* series, titled, *Revelation*. Blevins work is a preaching guide with brief commentary. He addresses scenes of Revelation chapter four and five in a section titled: Visions of the Seals (Revelation 4:1-8:4). He offers the following suggestions for the song passages in these chapters. Blevins writes suggesting that the song in Revelation 4:8 "might introduce a sermon entitled 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'"⁸⁶ For the song in Revelation 4:11 Blevins proposes a sermon called "The Creating God."⁸⁷ He then offers the following themes for this sermon: "First: God's creative power is a manifestation of his love for his creatures; Second: God continues to show his love for us by constantly renewing the world about us; Third: God's creative power will one day be manifested in a new world in which his creation will be manifest in all of its perfection."⁸⁸ What Blevins work accomplishes is the

⁸⁶ James L. Blevins, *Revelation*, Knox Preaching Guides, ed. John H. Hayes (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press 1984), 29.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 29-30.

developments of the possible themes in the texts rather than performing in-depth expository analysis of the passages.

In a follow-up to *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson edited *Biblical Sermons: How Twelve Preachers Apply the Principles of Biblical Preaching*. Joel Eidsness preached the apocalyptic passage, on Revelation 17 and 18. Throughout the sermon Eidsness spoke of the power Babylon has in our lives and how the Kingdom of God will ultimately prevail over the kingdom of man. Robinson's commentary identified his big idea as a principle-applied approach, that being: "We should identify the power of Babylon over our lives and dethrone her."⁸⁹ Eidsness notes three challenges in his sermon preparation from Revelation. First, was the use of symbolic language, in this case "Babylon" and the challenge of determining its meaning. Second, his commitment to expository preaching on this particular passage led Eidsness to work with a passage forty verses long. Finally, Eidsness speaks of the application question: "So what?" What difference will the message of this passage make in my life and the life of my congregation? Each of these challenges acknowledged by Eidsness is the work of the expository preacher.

In his article titled: "Homiletic Workshop: Sermon Preparation in Context," B. A. Müller proposes a new paradigm on how to produce sermons more relevant to the local church. He states his intention to "move away from a homiletical method of organizing, constructing a homiletic plan based on a basic homiletical idea (theme, subject, purpose) mostly hidden in the text and revealed by good exegesis" [Müller's

⁸⁹ Joel Eidsness, "Lament for the City of Man," *Biblical Sermons: How Twelve Preachers Apply the Principles of Biblical Preaching*, ed. Haddon Robinson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), 256.

emphasis].⁹⁰ Instead, Müller suggests the preacher “try to shape a homiletic plot which takes the congregation on a ‘trip’ from the total biblical textual plot to the ‘now’ of the listeners as participants in the ‘play’[Müller’s emphasis].⁹¹ As an example Müller interfaces Revelation 12:10-12 with the situation faced by church members under apartheid in South Africa. Müller points out the different approaches God’s people have taken in previous situations hostile to their faith and culture and how apocalyptic literature speaks to that situation. Through this homiletic approach Müller seeks to create a more effective method for engaging the church with the culture.

The next six reviews continue to introduce exegetical principles to follow in preparing sermons in Revelation. What is unique to their recommendations is the stress they place on the theme of worship in this process of sermon development.

In addition to Goldsworthy and others, Jon Paulien offers a simple exegetical guideline to studying Revelation in his book *The Deep Things of God: An Insider’s Guide to the Book of Revelation*. Paulien recommends, “The best method for studying Revelation will be the one that emerges naturally from the text.”⁹² He argues this point so we can see what John wanted us to see in the text. Explaining further Paulien writes, “exegesis involves a couple of things: seeking to understand what the writer was trying to say and holding open the possibility that we might learn

⁹⁰ B. A. Müller, “Homiletic Workshop: Sermon Preparation in Context,” *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* no. 7 (September 1991): 132.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. Jon Paulien, *The Deep Things of God: An Insider’s Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 95.

something from the text.”⁹³ What can we learn from the text when we follow this principle? Paulien answers: “A surprising aspect of the book of Revelation is the constant reference to worship.”⁹⁴ Following this method the reader quickly discovers, “Revelation is full of hymns, images of the sanctuary, and scenes of worship.”⁹⁵ By following this simple yet sound strategy for exegesis allows the preacher to conclude “how central worship is”⁹⁶ to Revelation, making it a plausible motif for the pulpit. Walter L. Liefeld examines the principle of scriptural function in his text, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon*. Liefeld insists that for expository preaching to be effective the original purpose of the passage must be discovered. Liefeld writes, “the more vivid and concrete we can make the function of a passage in its original life setting appear to the congregation, the more effective the application of that text will be.”⁹⁷ To demonstrate this, Liefeld lists several biblical topics often requiring attention from the pulpit. Under each heading he identifies Bible passages that have an original function related to this topic. Regarding the topic of worship he refers to Revelation stating, “The first passage that probably comes to mind is Revelation 4:1-5:14.”⁹⁸ He adds further, “The same can be said for other doxologies in Revelation, such as 7:12 and 11:17-18.”⁹⁹ Liefeld clearly sees the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 102.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Walter L. Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 98-99.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 101.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

topic of worship present in Revelation. Therefore, the role of the expository preacher is to discover the original function of the passage so the preacher can apply it more effectively to his local church setting.

In his introductory essay in *Preaching through the Apocalypse: Sermons from Revelation*, Joseph R. Jeter, Jr. addresses specific homiletical approaches to Revelation stating:

- (1) Explore the use of symbol and metaphor in our preaching.
- (2) Consider how narrative texts may lend themselves to narrative sermons.
- (3) Imaginatively reconstruct ancient images into pictures that people can see today.
- (4) Consider Revelation's natural affinity to experiences of worship.
- (5) Confront Revelation's tensions homiletically.
- (6) Test our understanding of God's power and promises in a post-Holocaust world.¹⁰⁰

Jeter understands the typical obstacles facing the preacher of Revelation, such as the use of symbol, Revelation's affinity to worship, but he appeals for the preacher to think through these matters in a more creative vein. While Jeter's checklist is not as technical as previous authors, his points are worth including for anyone who desires to preach Revelation effectively.

In the journal *Interpretation*, Fred Craddock wrote an article titled, “Preaching the Book of Revelation.” He begins by raising two questions. First, “would the careful study of Revelation be good stewardship of the precious time a minister has for sermon preparation?”¹⁰¹ The question is well put. No book of the Bible is capable of challenging both the casual reader and serious exegete more than

¹⁰⁰ Cornish R. Rogers, Joseph R. Jeter, Jr., eds., *Preaching through the Apocalypse: Sermons from Revelation* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1992), 10.

¹⁰¹ Fred B. Craddock, “Preaching the Book of Revelation,” *Interpretation* XL no. 3 (July 1986): 270.

capable of challenging both the casual reader and serious exegete more than Revelation, due in part to its literary genre, use of symbols, let alone twenty-first century application, to name a few. But Craddock notes Revelation's power to lead into worship stating, "Revelation invites the reader to sing, to pray, and to praise God."¹⁰² With this observation made, Craddock, obviously sees value in keeping Revelation in the preaching calendar.

For his second question Craddock asks, "for those who do enter the strange world of the Apocalypse with preaching in view, what clues or suggestions might be of help both for hearing and proclaiming the messages of the text?"¹⁰³ Craddock does not abandon the preacher after raising this thought but offers seven specific points as to what preaching from Revelation does offer. One of those identified by Craddock is worship and advises the following, "before planning a single sermon from this text, let the preacher read through Revelation in one or two sittings, marking every shout, every doxology, every prayer, every hallelujah, every benediction, every song."¹⁰⁴ Craddock clearly identifies the value of preaching the theme of worship in Revelation.

Craddock makes nine additional suggestions to guide the preacher through from exegesis to delivery. His points are well thought out for their sensitivity to both the demands made on the pastor's time as well as those made by the actual preaching text. For example, his second point requires the preacher of Revelation to "First of

¹⁰² Ibid., 278.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 270.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 278.

all, immerse yourself in the text of Revelation as a whole. Without any aids to understanding, read the book in huge portions at a time.”¹⁰⁵ This requires discipline but Craddock acknowledges its long-term benefits when the research and study of this endeavor are gathered for future use. He concludes, “Out of that reservoir one can preach and teach for years, returning to it again and again, never having to begin again at square one.”¹⁰⁶ An additional fine point he adds is number eight stating, “When bringing the sermon to completion, one looks for analogies from the world of the listeners which will bring the message home. In doing so, give careful attention to see that the analogies are true ones.”¹⁰⁷ We must remember he is speaking about preaching from Revelation. Because the message of Revelation is essentially an ‘either or proposition’—there is no middle ground where one can place their tent peg. Craddock clarifies this point: “Revelation is filled with the call to suffer, even to die, in faithful obedience to the gospel.”¹⁰⁸ Therefore, not only must our analogies be true but they must be appropriate in order to effectively illustrate the call to discipleship presented in Revelation. To do otherwise does a disservice to the overall message of the text. Craddock’s suggestions demonstrate his interest not only in developing the preacher but the congregation as well.

In his article on preaching from lectionary passages in Revelation for the Easter season, Wendell W. Frerichs identifies two of six passages from Revelation beyond chapter three. In the first, Revelation 5:11-14; Frerichs notes, “Christians

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 279.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 280.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 282.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

since the early church have been singing the praise of God who raised Jesus from the dead. But in Revelation 5 it is Christ himself who is worshipped.”¹⁰⁹ For the fourth week of Easter he highlights chapter 7:9-17. Frerichs’s concluding remarks explain how this particular passage relates to the rest of the book noting, “this text, remember, is an interlude in the savage ravage of life on the earth going through one horror after another (6:1-8:1).”¹¹⁰ What is this interlude identifying? John is clarifying the worship of the Lamb who brought the unnumbered multitude through the great tribulation. The importance of this identification cannot be overlooked when doing the critical work of exegesis on this passage. Frerichs’s article also demonstrates that a series on worship can be preached from Revelation regardless of one’s use of the lectionary.

David G. Buttrick also addresses preachers who use the lectionary by examining the homiletical possibilities for Revelation 7:9-17.¹¹¹ This is a worship passage not only because of its language in verse 11-12, but also in the action of the participants in verses 9-10. Buttrick, echoes the growing chorus of homiletic teachers who see the opportunity to preach the theme of worship in Revelation beyond chapter three, especially when using the lectionary.

The last review emphasizes the importance of preaching from Revelation. Where the previous six reviews noted the emphasis on the theme of worship, the final

¹⁰⁹ Wendell W. Frerichs, “God’s Song of Revelation: From Easter to Pentecost in the Apocalypse,” *Word & World* VI no. 2 (spring 1986): 220.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 223.

¹¹¹ David G. Buttrick, “Homiletical Resources for the Easter Season,” *Quarterly Review* 6 no. 1 (spring 1986): 79-84.

review stresses the need for the Christ-centered focus of preaching not only from Revelation but from a passage that calls the listener back to the worship of God.

Ministry Magazine contained a brief article by J. L. Shuler titled, “Build Whole Series on Revelation 14.” Shuler stresses the importance of keeping Christ at the heart of every evangelistic series. He proposes how he has accomplished this by beginning his presentations with 2 Peter 1:12 and introducing the concept of “present truth,” that allowed him to demonstrate that God has present truth for every generation just as He used Noah, Jonah, John the Baptist, and others to preach peculiar messages for their times. Shuler then introduces Revelation 14 as the foundational passage to explain the present truth for this time throughout the remainder of the series. Shuler explains, “We should study how to make our presentations a connected, logical, natural unfolding of that three fold message, with Christ as the center.”¹¹² Shuler offers a principled approach to preaching from Revelation chapter 14 by offering the hope of Jesus the Christ who alone is worthy of worship.

The Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review establishes two points. First, that Christ-centered worship is a motif that can be developed for preaching expository sermons beyond Revelation chapter three. Second, the literature reviewed on methodology demonstrates a lack of a clear step-by-step method showing how preaching

¹¹² J. L. Shuler, “Build Whole Series from Revelation 14” *Ministry Magazine*, 8 no. 5 May 1935, 9.

expository sermons beyond chapter three in the book of Revelation can be accomplished.

CHAPTER THREE: THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Chapter three examines the theological reasons for writing this thesis. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section one gives the theological argument for using expository preaching to proclaim Christ-centered worship beyond chapter three in the book of Revelation. Section two summarizes the evidence from section one into a final conclusion.

The Biblical Reasons for Preaching

When searching the New Testament for the preferred method of communicating the Scriptures, Paul's final words to Timothy leave no room for doubt, "Preach the word!"¹¹³ To preach means "to publish, proclaim, as a herald, to announce openly and publicly."¹¹⁴ The word Paul refers to is *logos*, the eternal word of God. His command to preach the *logos* is a clear reference to the scriptures spoken of in 2 Timothy 3:16. The New Testament record demonstrates Paul followed his own counsel not only in his farewell address to the Ephesian elders,¹¹⁵ but in his preaching events recorded throughout the book of Acts.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ 2 Timothy 4:2.

¹¹⁴ Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 230.

¹¹⁵ Acts 20:27.

¹¹⁶ See Acts 9:20; 13:13-49; 14:1, 7; 17:1-4.

Paul did not stand alone in his conviction to preach the word. In his first epistle, Peter reminds the Christian not only of the seed of origin of their new birth experience—the word of God,¹¹⁷ but the means by which the word was presented to them, “Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”¹¹⁸ Both Paul and Peter were strong advocates for communicating God’s word through preaching.

In addition to Paul and Peter the New Testament identifies several others who used this method of communicating the gospel, including Stephen, Apollos, and other unnamed preachers.¹¹⁹ Going back further we discover that preaching was used by Jesus¹²⁰ and his forerunner-cousin, John the Baptist.¹²¹ Preaching is also exhibited in the Old Testament as well.¹²² Although styles varied from person to person, the final analysis concludes—it is biblical to preach.

But in the weekly cycle the most challenging question facing the preacher is not whether it’s biblical to preach, but what do I preach this week that is biblical? My homiletics professor once told our class, “If you visit your members regularly you’ll never lack for subjects to preach on.”¹²³ Certainly, if the shepherd is in touch with his flock he will quickly learn what issues need to be addressed from the pulpit. But

¹¹⁷ 1 Peter 1:23.

¹¹⁸ 1 Peter 1:25b.

¹¹⁹ Acts 2: 14-40; 3:12-26; 7:2-53; 11:19-20; 18:24-28.

¹²⁰ Mark 1:14.

¹²¹ Mark 1:4.

¹²² 2 Peter 2:5 refers to Noah, the Old Testament Patriarch as a preacher; 1 Kings 18; Ezekiel 20:46; 21:2.

¹²³ The quote is from my first homiletics professor, Dr. C. Raymond Holmes during my Introduction to Homiletics class. Dr. Holmes taught on the campus of Andrews University at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan in the summer of 1992.

while this appears easy, its practical implementation can be quite challenging. For example, while visiting a church member you learn about their marriage problems. A natural question following that visit might be—should you preach that week on how to have a happy marriage? Although your sermon may have the strongest biblical evidence for how to have a happy marriage, the message itself may never reach the member in need because they'll feel singled out for having their personal life made public, even though names were never mentioned. With all said, a topical sermon on “Solving Your Marriage Problems by the Book” has its place on the church calendar, but preaching topical sermons every week based solely on the private disclosure of church members can leave the preacher frazzled, and alienate his congregation in the process. The question then remains: is there a type of preaching that can be both biblical in content and relevant to the congregation without trying to single people out?

Expository preaching can best satisfy the requirements of biblical soundness and relevancy. In his book *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*,¹²⁴ Haddon Robinson, one of the most vocal advocates for expository preaching, provides this definition of an expository sermon:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

¹²⁵ Ibid., 21.

With this definition in mind, the goal of expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, or the big idea, as Robinson has often restated it for his students. This understanding of the big idea of the passage, and ultimately of the message, does not originate from the members of the congregation or even the preacher, but is based on what the text says from the study of its historical, grammatical and literary context. Therefore, what is delivered during the preaching event remains a biblical message. If this message is communicated effectively, it will be relevant to its listeners.

The Biblical Reasons for Expository Preaching

Are the principles of expository preaching reflected anywhere in Scripture?

Let's begin with the Old Testament. The narrative found in Nehemiah 8:1-12 describes a reading from the book of the Law by Ezra before a large crowd. This reading was followed with explanations by the Levites, who helped the people understand what the passages meant. In return, the people responded with weeping and mourning. The points highlighted in this passage clearly illustrate the basic principles of expository preaching being practiced, such as the reading of a specific passage of scripture, in this case the words of the Law, followed by an explanation so the congregation could both understand and apply the words of the Law in their lives.

A reflection of the principles of expository preaching in the New Testament can be found in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5-7 Jesus teaches his disciples how they should live in accordance with God's word with specific application to the law, and the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and alms giving. Jesus develops these concepts by either quoting or making reference to a passage in the Old

Testament Scripture. He then explains how to apply these truths as opposed to the superficial way they had been applied in the past. Matthew was careful to record the audience reaction writing, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching.”¹²⁶ One principle of expository preaching clearly seen in the Sermon on the Mount is the specific applications Jesus made based on the passages he preached from.

Another New Testament example is found in the book of Acts, where the apostle Peter preached from the book of Joel.¹²⁷ His message was a Biblical response to the question raised by crowd about the speaking of tongues on the Day of Pentecost. His message consisted of a passage read, explained, and applied to his audience in their context based on Joel’s prophecy and two Psalms of David. Luke describes what took place in response to Peter’s conclusion. “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”¹²⁸ The audience’s response leaves no room for doubt concerning Peter’s exposition. The message was both biblical in content and relevant in its application, demonstrating the fundamental principles of expository preaching.

The three examples from Scripture demonstrate the principles of expository preaching. In each instance cited, a Bible passage was read, explained, and then applied to those listening. In addition, the response from those listening is both

¹²⁶ Matthew 7:28.

¹²⁷ Acts 2:14-39.

¹²⁸ Acts 2:37.

dramatic and positive. The conclusion from this analysis is that the principles of expository preaching are reflected in the Bible.

The Biblical Reason for Preaching Christ

Preaching, expository or otherwise, is a method designed to reveal content. But what is the content of preaching supposed to be? To say “the Bible” is too broad an answer. Preaching is based on Scripture, but when Scripture is preached, what specifically is it supposed to reveal? In the gospel of John, Jesus refers to the Scriptures as a witness to his ministry, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”¹²⁹ Luke tells us that Jesus explained to his disciples on the road to Emmaus his role as Messiah from the Scriptures, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”¹³⁰ Later that day, Jesus spoke to a larger gathering of his disciples saying, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”¹³¹ These passages demonstrate the Christ-centered focus of Scripture.

The apostles recognized this quality in the Scriptures. In his gospel, Matthew identified numerous passages from the Old Testament to show how Jesus was the

¹²⁹ John 5:39.

¹³⁰ Luke 24:27.

¹³¹ Luke 24:44.

fulfillment of prophecy. By doing so he identifies the Christ-centered focus of the Old Testament Scriptures.

In the benediction of his epistle to the church at Rome, Paul wrote, ‘Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations.’¹³² While Paul wrote of God’s ability to establish believers in the gospel by the preaching of Jesus Christ, he also stressed how the preaching of Jesus Christ was based on the prophetic Scriptures.

In Paul’s final counsel to Timothy he reminds him not only of the authority of the Scriptures in the life of the preacher, but their purpose, “And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”¹³³ In this passage Paul’s emphasis to Timothy is not only on the benefits of Scripture, to make him wise to salvation, but its revelation—Christ Jesus. It is Christ Jesus who is revealed in the Scriptures.

In his second epistle, Peter acknowledges the soon approach of his death. Seeking to encourage the believers to remain in the truth he finds it necessary to remind them of the certainty of God’s word.¹³⁴ More specifically, he identifies how the Scriptures are more reliable than the experience of his eyewitness account with James, and John, when Christ was transfigured on the holy mountain foreshadowing

¹³² Romans 16:25-26a.

¹³³ 2 Timothy 3:15.

¹³⁴ 2 Peter 1:16-19; Mark 9:1-7.

his second coming.¹³⁵ In doing so, Peter's testimony sheds light on the Christ-centered focus of prophecy bringing assurance to the faith of believers in every age of the promise of his second coming.

The witness provided by Jesus and his apostles leads to the conclusion that there is biblical support for maintaining a Christ-centered focus when preaching expository sermons.

The Biblical Reasons for Preaching the Worship Motif in Revelation

The purpose of this thesis is to use the principles of expository preaching in order to develop sermons on the theme of Christ-centered worship found in the book of Revelation beyond chapter three. A brief examination of the book of Revelation beyond chapter three will demonstrate whether this theme is present.

One of the most outstanding passages of Scripture related to worship is found in Revelation chapters four and five. Both chapters consist of a narrative describing the throne of God and the heavenly activity that surrounds it. Throughout the narrative there is a series of five hymn-like responses to the heavenly activity described. These responses are directed to God and to the Lamb, a reference to Christ.

This pattern of responsive hymns occurs throughout Revelation. One of these hymns is found in Revelation 7:12. This passage is part of a larger narrative in Revelation 7:9-17 describing an unnumbered multitude of people redeemed from the earth worshipping God and the Lamb.

¹³⁵ 2 Peter 1:16-19; Matthew 16:28-17:9; Mark 9:1-7; Luke 9:27-36.

Another worship scene is found in Revelation 11:15-19. In this narrative, the 24 elders respond to the news that Christ has received the kingdoms of this world. They respond by worshipping God and praising Him with a hymn.

Examining the theme of worship in Revelation would not be complete without considering the content of chapter 13. In the 18 verses in this chapter the word “worship” appears five times. This frequent mention of worship cannot be discounted. The description of the beast’s ability to influence the entire world to worship makes it very clear that the earth’s final crisis will involve the issue of worship before the return of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 14:6-13 contains one of the most sobering passages in all of Scripture. It depicts three angels calling out to the inhabitants of the earth to return to the worship of the Creator, and to abandon the false worship of the beast, and his image. Part of what contributes to the overall drama of this message is its location near the center of the book. Stefanovic notes, “An increasing number of contemporary scholars observe a chiastic structure in the book of Revelation.”¹³⁶ With this view in mind Revelation 14:6-13 is seen as either part of, or near the center of this chiasm.¹³⁷ The purpose of the chiastic structure is to emphasize what is at the climax of the chiasm. To consider this only adds more weight to the theological point of this passage and what statement it makes on behalf of the entire book.

¹³⁶ Ranko Stephanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs: MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 35-40.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 36-37. For example, Stefanovic points that out E. Schüssler Fiorenza’s proposal of the climax of Revelation is from chapters 10-15:4; Kenneth Strand sees all of chapter 14 as the dividing line in the entire book, whereas Stefanovic sees chapter 14 as just after the climax.

Revelation 19:1-10 is another narrative passage describing the worship of God. After the announcement is made of God's judgment of the great harlot the twenty four elders and the four living creatures respond by worshiping God.

Summary and Conclusion

This brief survey demonstrates the biblical support for doing this thesis project. This claim is based on the following reasons. First, this survey demonstrates that preaching is the preferred method for communicating the Scriptures. The evidence to support this claim is revealed by the various individuals throughout the Old and New Testaments who used and advocated this method of communicating Scripture. While there is no mention of any specific type of preaching method in the Bible, both the Old and New Testament provide examples that reflect the principles of expository preaching as defined by Robinson. In addition, because Jesus, Peter and Paul understood the Christ-centered focus of Scripture, there is biblical support for preaching expository sermons with a Christ-centered focus. Finally, a brief survey of Revelation shows the presence of the theme of worship within the book. Therefore, the conclusion can be made for developing an expository sermon series based on the theme of Christ-centered worship beyond chapter three in the book of Revelation.

CHAPTER FOUR: SURVEY RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to share the results of the survey conducted on the students of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary who enrolled in the *Preacher and the Message* and *Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible* Doctor of Ministry Program. This survey was conducted to examine the patterns and concerns of preachers as they relate to doing expository preaching in the book of Revelation. The survey consisted of 25 questions. The questions are grouped into three categories. Category one (questions 1-3) asked for general information; category two (questions 4-23) examined views on sermons, the book of Revelation and preaching patterns in Revelation; category three (questions 24-25) inquired about the challenges and motivation to preaching Revelation.

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one contains the survey results. In this section each question is reproduced as it appeared on the survey to better serve the reader. Following every question is a brief text sharing the survey results. The text is then followed with a bar graph and table to provide a visual reference of the survey results for that specific question. Occasionally there is additional text providing comparison and analysis of the survey results. Section two analyzes the survey results in light of the overall thesis project and concludes with a summary.

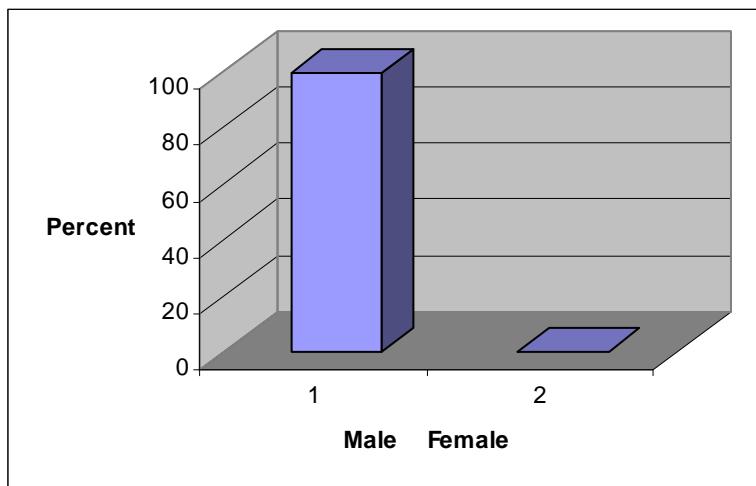
The Methods Used

The methods used for this survey consist of the following. The addresses of those surveyed were given to me by permission of the Gordon-Conwell Doctor of Ministry office at my request. The survey participants were contacted only once through the initial mailing of the survey. Included with the survey was a cover sheet explaining the purpose of the survey with brief instructions. Along with the survey was a self-addressed stamped envelope. The survey was mailed out on February 14, 2006. All the participants were given a return deadline of March 31, 2006. The survey data was compiled after the March 31 deadline. The initial mailing consisted of 252 surveys. Six of the 252 were returned because of incorrect address information, leaving an actual total of 246 surveys. 125 of the surveys were returned for a return rate of 51%. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix B.

The Survey Results

1. Gender: Male Female

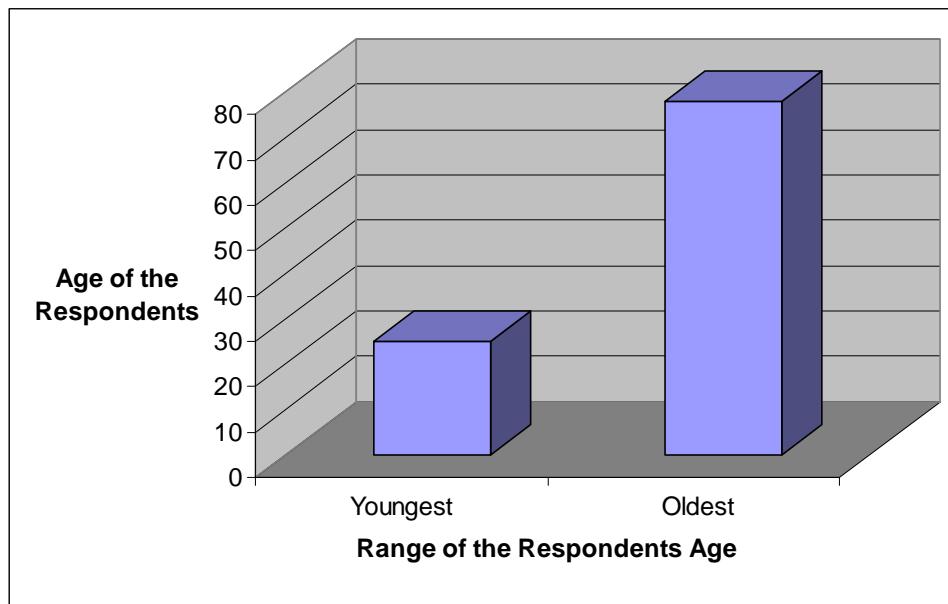
There were 121 responses to this question. Of these responses 121 (100%) identified their gender as “male.”



Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	121	100%
Female	0	0%
Total	121	100%

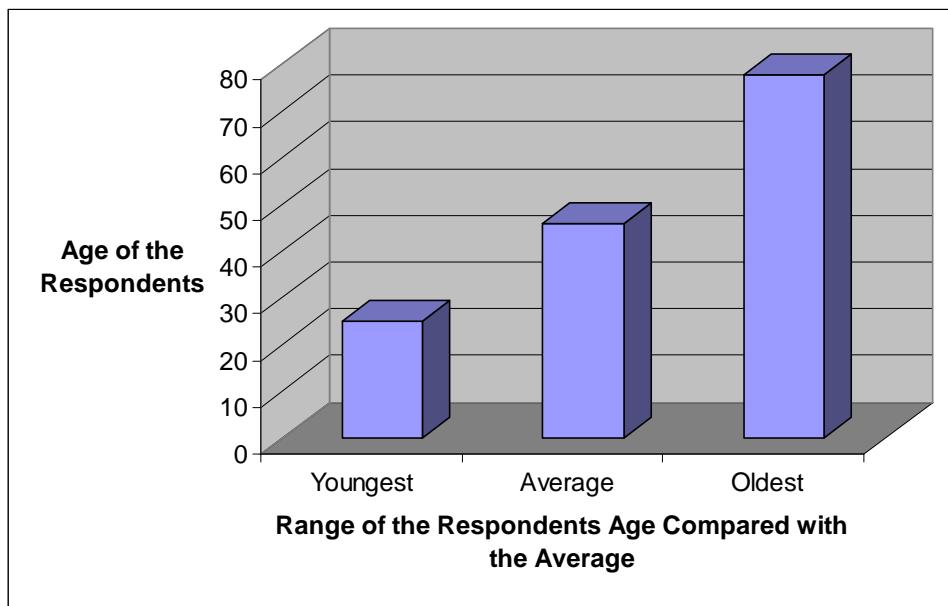
2. Please indicate your age: _____

There were 124 respondents to this question. The youngest respondent was 25 years of age and the oldest respondent was 78. The average age of the respondents was 46 years of age.



Category	Age of Respondent in Years
Youngest	25
Oldest	78

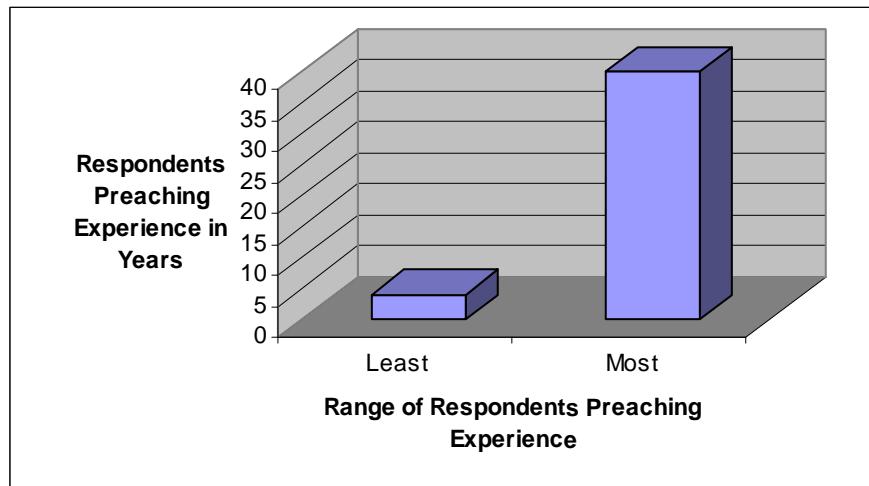
The following graph and table compare the range of the respondent's age with the average age.



Category	Age of the Respondent in Years
Youngest	25
Average	46
Oldest	78

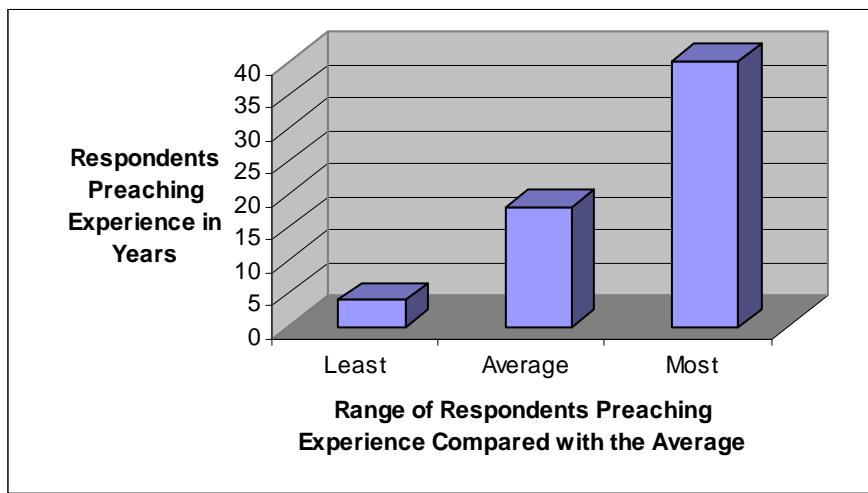
3. How many years have you been preaching in pastoral ministry? _____

There were 125 responses to this question. The least experienced respondent had only four years preaching, whereas the most experienced had 40 years. The average amount of preaching experience in years was 18.



Category	Experience in Years
Least	4
Most	40

The following graph and table compare the range of the respondent's preaching experience in years with the average number of years in preaching experience.



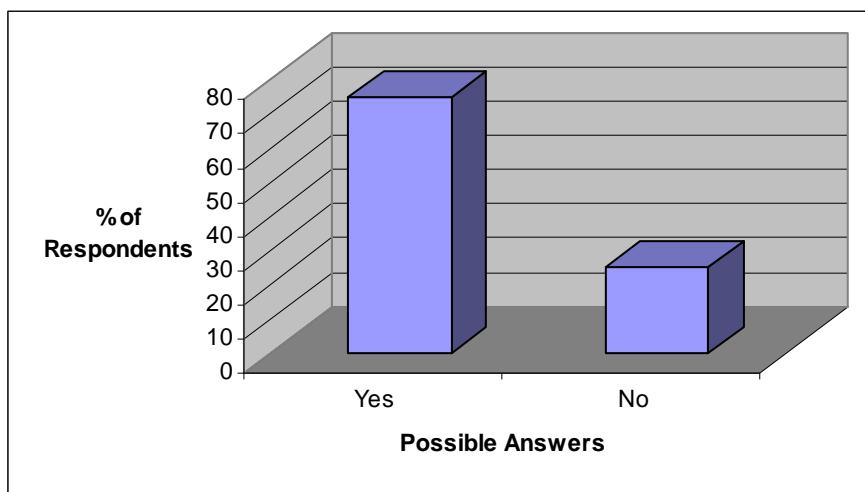
Category	Experience in Years
Least	4
Average	18
Most	40

The summary of the survey results from category one demonstrates the survey respondents wide range of age and preaching experiences. The typical respondents were 46 year old males with 18 years of preaching experience. The survey results

show the respondents have a considerable amount of experience in both life and preaching.

4. Should every sermon be Christ-centered? Yes No

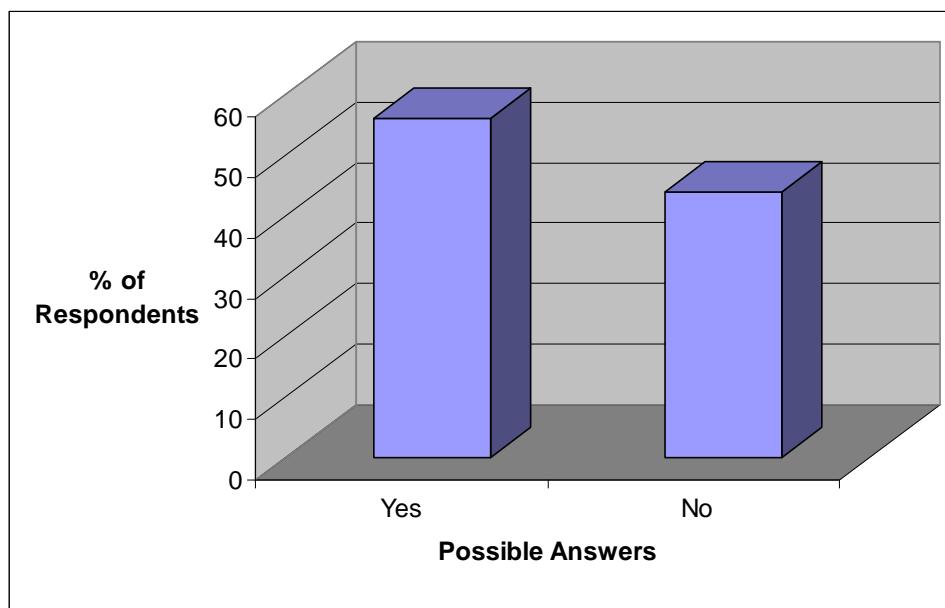
There were 121 responses to this question. 91 of the respondents or 75% answered “yes.” 30 respondents or 25% answered “no.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	75%
No	30	25%
Total	121	100%

5. Is a Christ-centered sermon different than a Theo-centric sermon? Yes No

There were 115 responses to this question. 64 of the respondents or 56% said “yes.” While 51 of the respondents or 44% said “no.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	56%
No	51	44%
Total	115	100%

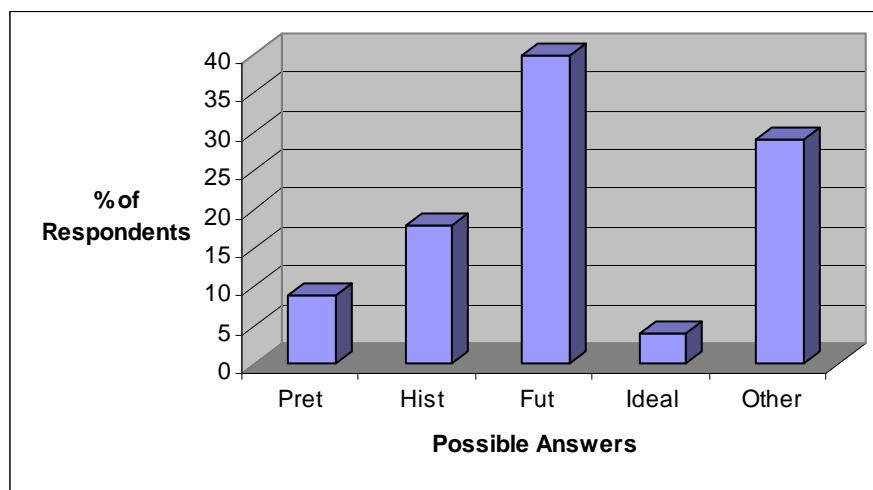
The response to question four shows there is a fairly strong commitment by those surveyed to maintain a Christ-centered focus in their preaching. Whereas

question five indicates that a small majority of the respondents see a clear distinction between a Christ-centered sermon and a Theo-centric sermon. The responses from these two questions indicate a strong desire to keep a redemptive focus within the sermon.

6. Please identify the answer that best describes your interpretation of the book of Revelation.

Preterist Historicist Futurist Idealist Other _____

There were 125 responses to this question. 11 respondents or 9% identified themselves as preterist. 23 of the respondents or 18% identified themselves as historicists. 50 respondents or 40% said they were futurists. 5 respondents or 4% identified themselves as idealists. There were 36 or 29% of the respondents who identified their interpretation of Revelation as other.



Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Preterist	11	9%
Historicist	23	18%

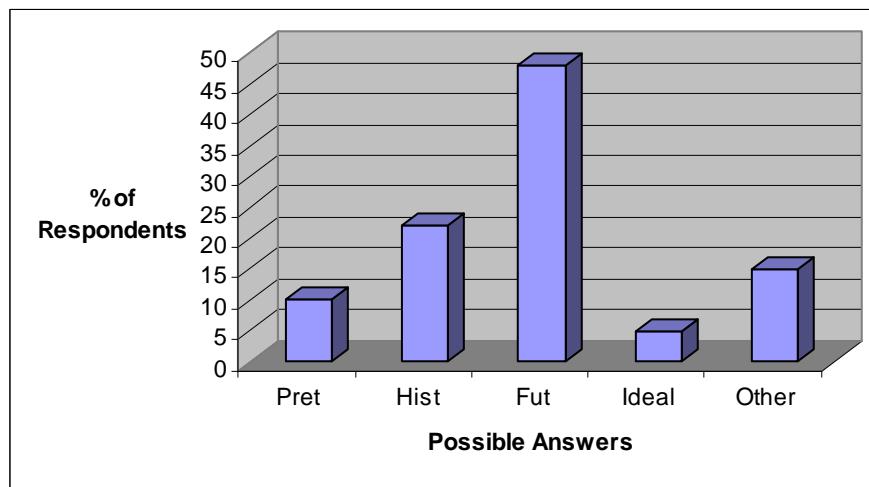
Futurist	50	40%
Idealist	5	4%
Other	36	29%
Total	125	100%

At first glance the response of 29% for the category of “other” in question six raises a natural curiosity as to what the “other” general interpretations of Revelation could be. While the 29% is certainly not a majority, it does indicate a significant block of respondents holding different views from any of the four most common interpretations of Revelation. There were 36 respondents who answered “other,” on question six. The table below identifies the total number of responses with their written answers.

Frequency of Responses	Answers Given
8	“No answer”
6	“Other”
4	“Combination/all”
4	“Past/future”
4	“Apocalyptic”
3	“Historicist/futurist”
2	“Cyclical”
1	“Past/present/future”
1	“Progressive dispensationalist”

1	“Comfort”
1	“Revelation interprets Revelation”
1	“Not sure”
Total: 36	

This examination indicates a small confusion regarding how the book is interpreted in a general sense versus the genre or purpose of the book. For example eight of the respondents wrote “no answer;” while six said “other.” Four individuals responded with “apocalyptic” which is a genre of Revelation rather than an interpretation. There was one individual who said the interpretation of Revelation is “comfort.” But that is more of a purpose than an interpretation. Finally, there was one individual who wrote in “not sure.” This brings the number of responses that must be discounted to 20, bringing the total of 36 down to 16. The following graph and table show the new percentages.



Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Preterist	11	10%
Historicist	23	22%
Futurist	50	48%
Idealist	5	5%
Other	16	15%
Total	105	100%

The ability of the preacher to identify an interpretation of the book is crucial to preaching expository sermons. The purpose of this observation is not to criticize any specific interpretation as much as it is to highlight the importance of distinguishing an interpretation from the purpose, genre or any other classification of the book. This response emphasizes the role that quality theological training plays in preparing individuals for pulpit ministry.

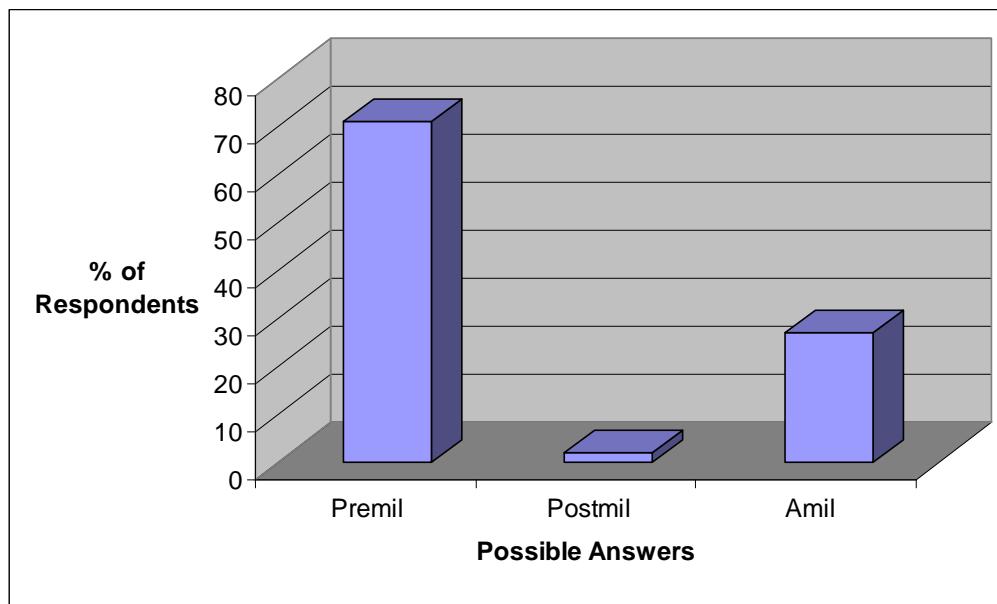
While this adjustment indicates the majority of those surveyed still identify with the futurist interpretation of Revelation, it's important to remember 75% of those who selected the category of "other" were willing to acknowledge that the best

description of Revelation's interpretation may best described as a combination rather than use just one broad category.

7. Please identify the term that best describes your interpretation of the second coming of Jesus in conjunction with the millennium.

Premillenialist Postmillenialist Amillenialist

There were 119 responses to this question. Of these responses 85 or 71% said they were premillenialists. There were 2 or 2% who said they were postmillennialist. There were 32 respondents or 27% who identified themselves as amillenialist.

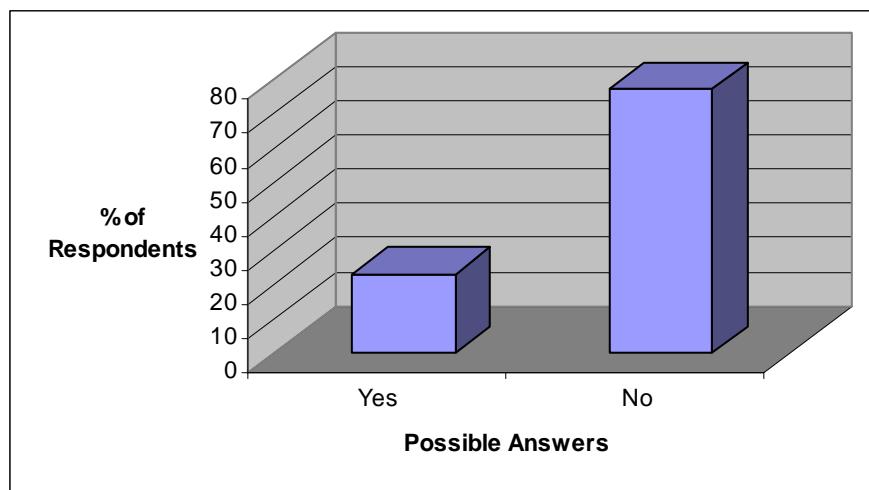


Answers	Frequency	Percentage
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Premillennialist	85	71%
Postmillennialist	2	2%
Amillennialist	32	27%
Total	119	100%

8. Is it essential to have a specific opinion of the millennium in order to preach from the book of Revelation? Yes No

There were 121 responses to this question. There were 28 respondents (23%) said yes. There were 93 respondents (77%) said no.

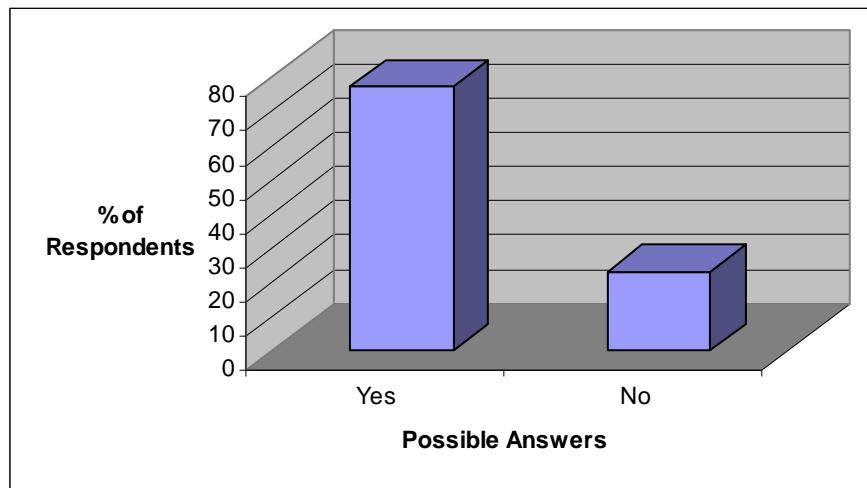


Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	23%
No	93	77%
Total	121	100%

While 71% of the preachers who responded believe Christ is coming before the millennium, 77% of the preachers also believe it's not necessary to have a view of the millennium in order to preach Revelation. The response to question eight shows a remarkable consistency with question (17) which identifies Rev. 20—the millennium chapter as one of the most popular to preach on, demonstrating while preachers may be unclear regarding its symbolism the chapter's message is clear—one day even death will be destroyed.

9. Have you ever preached on the seven churches found in Revelation chapters two and three? Yes No

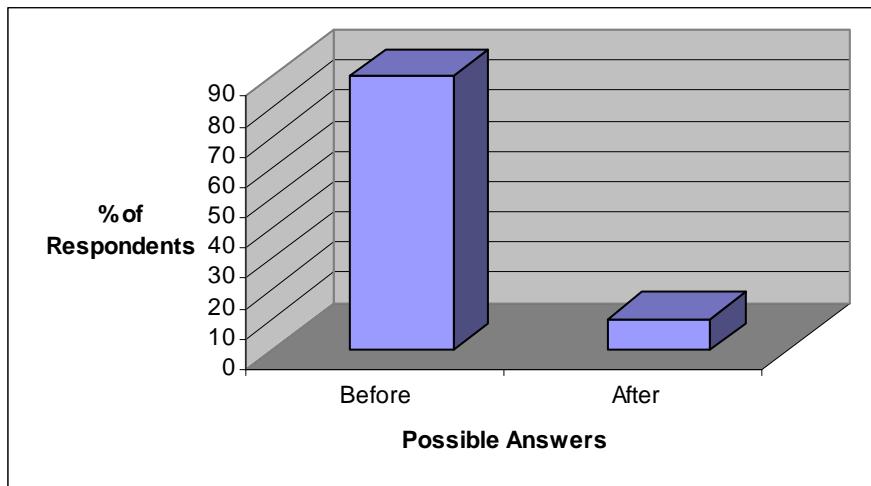
There were 124 respondents to this question. 96 respondents (77%) answered "yes." There were 28 respondents (23%) said "no."



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	77%
No	96	23%
Total	124	100%

10. If you said yes to question #9, when did this preaching event take place in relation to the start of your Doctor of Ministry program? Before After

There were 88 responses to this question. There were 79 respondents (90%) who said "before." There were 9 respondents (10%) who said "after."

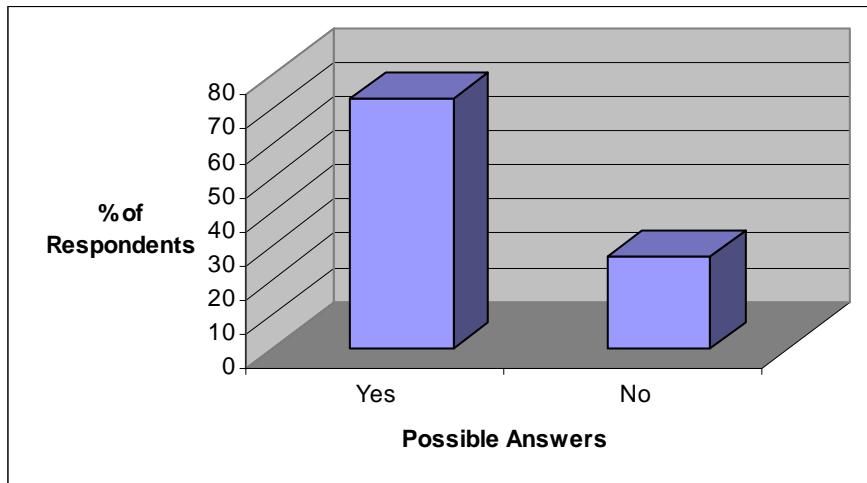


Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Before	79	90%
After	9	10%

Total	88	100%
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11. If you said yes to question #9, was this a sermon series? Yes No

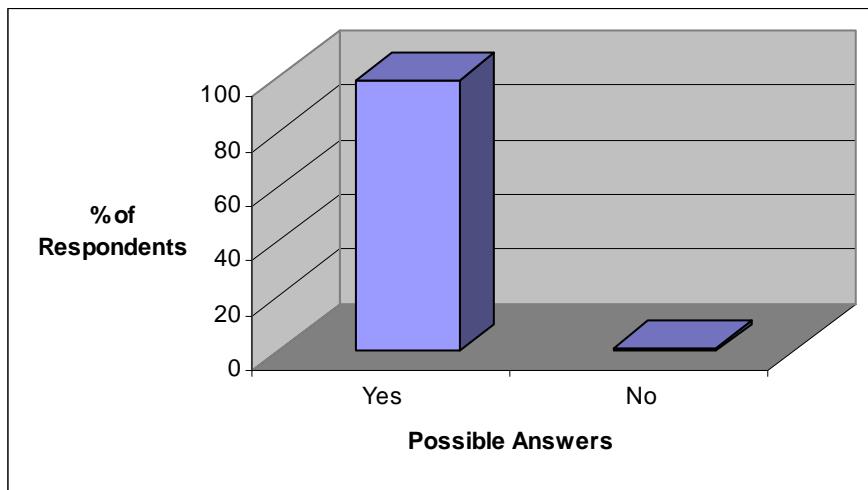
There were 96 respondents to this question. There were 70 respondents (73%) who said “yes.” There were 26 respondents (27%) who said “no.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	73%
No	26	27%
Total	96	100%

12. If you said yes to question #9, were these expository sermons? Yes No

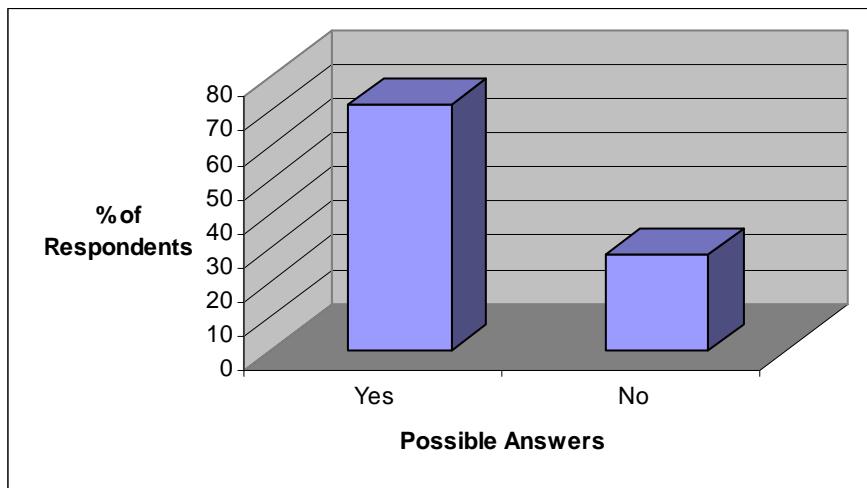
There were 95 responses to this question. There were 94 respondents (99%) who said "yes." There was one respondent (1%) who said "no."



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	94	99%
No	1	1%
Total	95	100%

13. Have you ever preached from the book of Revelation beyond chapters two and three? Yes No

There were 124 respondents to this question. There were 89 respondents (71%) who said "yes." There were 35 respondents (28%) who said "no."

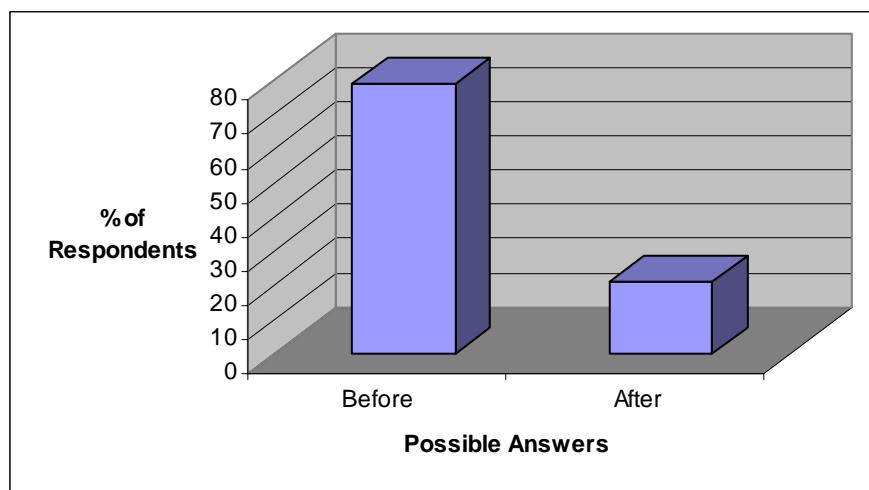


Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	72%
No	35	28%

Total	124	100%
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14. If you said yes to question #13, when did this preaching event take place in relation to the start of your Doctor of Ministry program? Before After

There were 73 responses to this question. There were 58 respondents (79%) who answered "before." There were 15 respondents (21%) who answered "after."

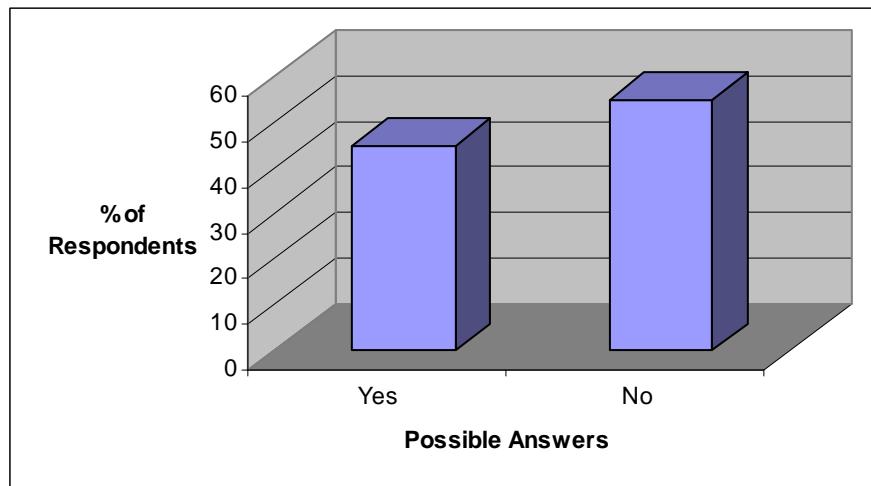


Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Before	58	79%
After	15	21%

Total	73	100%
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15. If you said yes to question #13, was this a sermon series? Yes No

There were 85 responses to this question. There were 38 respondents (45%) who said “yes.” There were 47 respondents (55%) who said “no.”

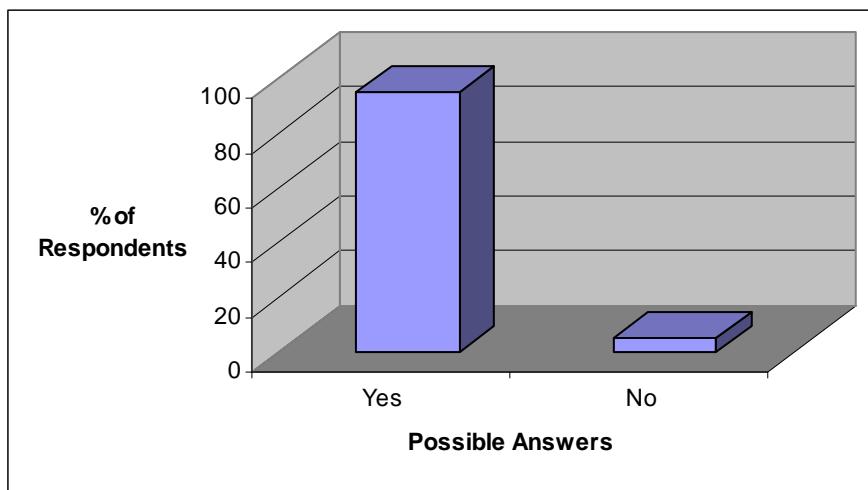


Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	45%
No	47	55%

Total	85	100%
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16. If you said yes to question #13, were these expository sermons? Yes No

There were 85 responses to this question. There were 81 respondents (95%) who said “yes.” There were four respondents (5%) who said “no.”



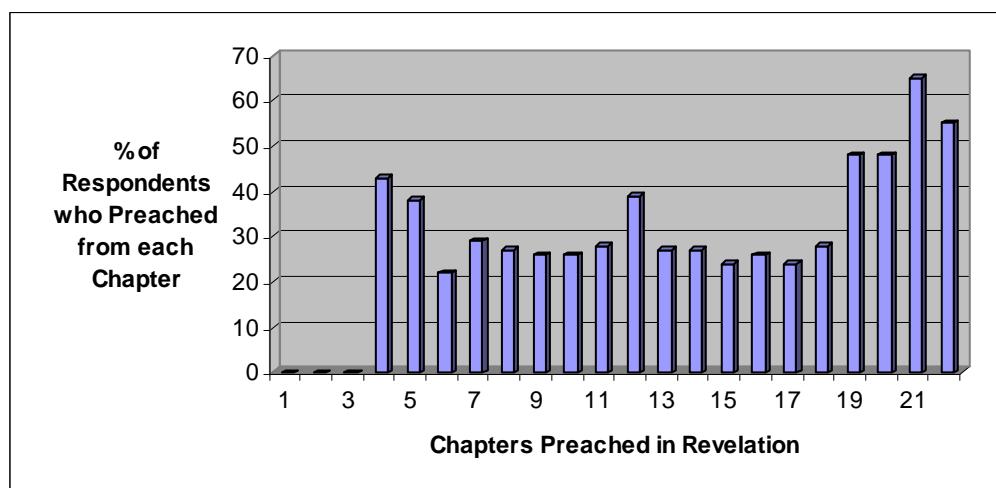
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	81	95%
No	4	5%

Total	85	100%
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While the results from questions (9-16) demonstrate Revelation is preached and there is a very strong commitment to expository preaching on the part of those surveyed, the most telling fact from these results maybe the 28% drop from those who preached a series in chapters two and three versus those who attempted a series beyond chapter three. This fact indicates that fewer congregations are able to experience the full impact the book was intended to have on the universal church.

17. If you said yes to question #13, identify the chapters you preached from in the space provided.

There were 82 responses to this question. The responses helped to identify where the greatest frequency of preaching took place between Revelation chapters four to twenty-two.¹³⁸



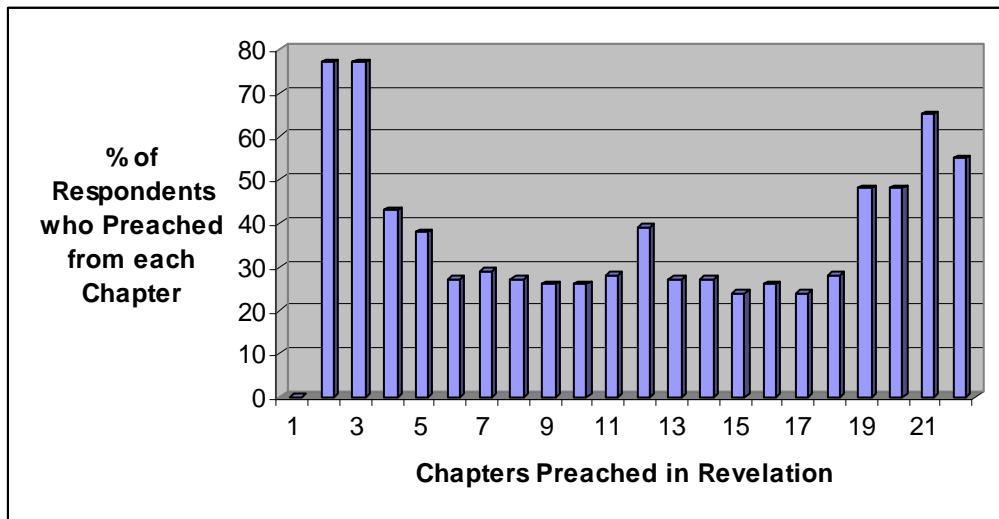
¹³⁸ Chapters 1-3 were not measured in this question.

Chapters Preached	Frequency	Percentage
4	35	43%
5	31	38%
6	22	27%
7	24	29%
8	22	27%
9	21	26%
10	21	26%
11	23	28%
12	32	39%
13	22	27%
14	22	27%
15	20	24%

16	21	26%
17	20	24%
18	23	28%
19	39	48%
20	39	48%
21	53	65%
22	45	55%

The following chart compares the percentages of those who preached in chapters 2-3 with those who preached in chapters 4-22.¹³⁹ This information is based on a comparison of the data from question 9 on page 63 and the data from question 17 on page 71 and 72.

¹³⁹ The frequency and percentage of preaching in Revelation chapter one were not measured in this survey therefore no information was included in this chart.



The results from question 17 shows the portion of Revelation beyond chapter three receiving the greatest preaching emphasis is towards the end of the book. What could be the possible reason for this pattern? A comparison of the results for questions (11) and (15) shows a 28% drop from those who preached a series in chapters two and three with those who preached a series beyond chapter three. This result may indicate that preaching beyond chapter three is more of a one time event

rather then in a series. This one time event may be funerals¹⁴⁰ where chapters 21 and 22 would have more direct application then at other times. Another reason may be the desire of the preacher to share the hope of heaven¹⁴¹ with the congregation where most of the material relating to this theme is located.

A comparison of the data from question 9 and 17 confirms what some scholars have said¹⁴² that Revelation chapters two and three get the most attention in the pulpit. In addition, the data also reveals what chapters get the least attention in the pulpit.

18. If you said yes to question #13, how many sermons did you preach? ____

There were 66 responses to this question. The least number of sermons preached by an individual respondent who went beyond Revelation chapter three was one sermon. The most sermons preached beyond Revelation chapter three was 48. The average number of sermons preached beyond Revelation chapter three was 10.

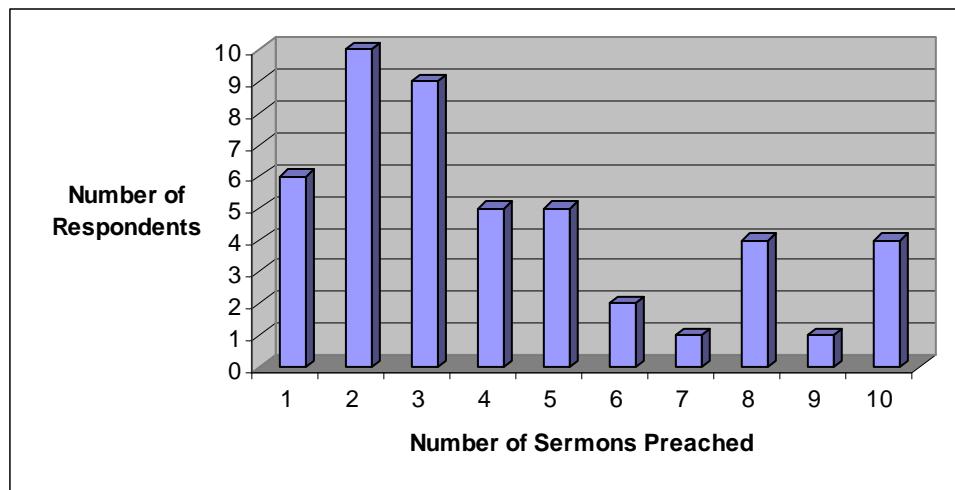
¹⁴⁰ Although there was no question indicating what event the sermons were preached at one respondent stated his sermon was for a funeral.

¹⁴¹ The “Hope of Heaven” theme is one that was indicated on the survey as being identified as the theme of the sermon’s preached beyond chapter three.

¹⁴² Two of these sources are J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 40; Fred B. Craddock, “Preaching the Book of Revelation,” *Interpretation* XL no. 3 (July 1986): 279.

The Number of Sermons Preached		
Least	Average	Most
1	10	48

The most frequent number of sermons for a series of sermons beyond Revelation chapter three fell in the 1-10 sermon range. There were 47 respondents or (71%) said they preached a sermon series in this range. The chart below gives a breakdown of the number of respondents and the number amount of sermons they preached in the 1-10 sermon series range. The average number of sermons in a series in this range was 5.



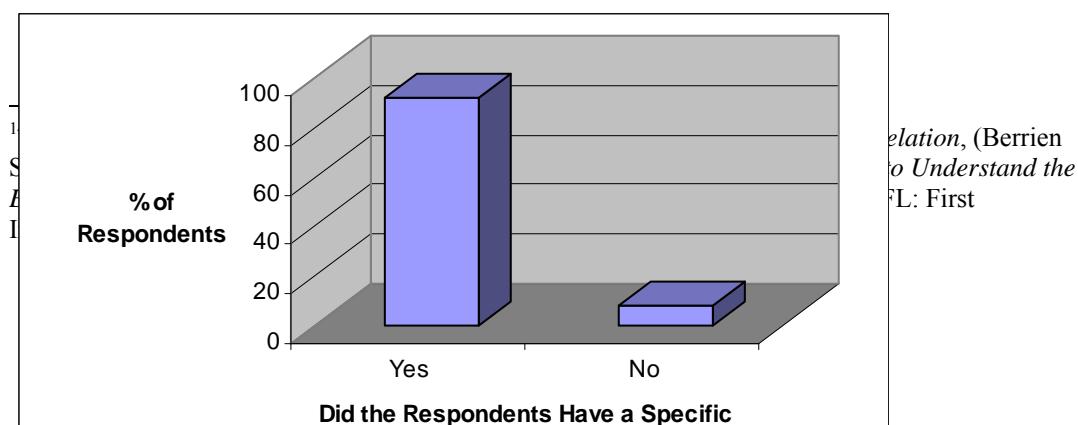
What is of importance in the chart above is that of the 47 respondents in this sermon series range 35 (or 74%) said they preached five or less sermons in this range. This means that a little over half or 53% of the 66 total respondents to this question preached five or less sermons in the 1-10 sermon range when they ventured beyond Revelation chapter three. Based on the previous survey data it is plausible to suggest

that a majority of the sermon series preached were located either in chapters four and five or in chapters 19-22.

This means a great majority of the preaching emphasis in Revelation takes place in the outer edges of the book either in chapters two and three or the last four chapters (19-22). This is of interest because some scholars of Revelation believe the book's overall structure is organized in a chiasm.¹⁴³ In a chiastic structure the edges point toward the middle. Looking at the survey data in this light means the heart of the book is not examined in the pulpit as consistently as other portions. The fact is Revelation has both warnings to give and rewards that are promised because a great test is foretold. To ignore that test results in a failure to communicate Revelation's warnings or rewards in their full context.

19. If you said yes to question #13, was there a specific overall theme you found in the text that you tried to bring out in your sermons? Yes No

There were 84 responses to this question. There were 77 respondents (92%) who said "yes" they did have a specific theme. There were 7 respondents (8%) who said "no" they did not have a specific theme.



Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	92%
No	7	8%
Total	84	100%

The responses to question (19) indicate a commitment from the preachers to communicate the unique message from the passages selected. What follows is the question asking the respondent to identify the theme and their specific responses.

20. If you said yes to question #19, briefly identify this theme in the space provided below.

There were 69 responses to this question. These responses were grouped together based on the theme identified in the response.

The theme of worship

Worship

Worship

Worship & holiness

Worship & our call to focus on eternity

The ultimate fulfillment of God's sovereign will and unchanging purpose that results in worship.

Jesus Christ is to be worshipped because He will establish His kingdom in the world.

Theme of confident praise/worship in the face of adversity, consistently shone through.

Worship & Christmas

Message on Jesus as the central figure of the book; One message of the entire book God is Lord and the sufferings of the faithful will one day be brought to an end; One on worship

Rev. 5 Christ is worthy of worship; Rev. 22 The glorious future in heaven.

Worship; judgment; restoration of all things

Songs of Heaven

The theme of Jesus

Jesus Christ.

Revelation of Jesus Christ

The book is not just a revelation from Jesus—it's a revelation of Jesus...Jesus in all His power and majesty. So in the 9 messages I was working at what we learn about Jesus...obviously tho, I had to stay "up the ladder of abstraction" and not try to decipher all the details.

The return of Christ and the establishment of His rule on earth

Despite all the suffering, the Lamb will bring redemption to His children

Christ's return

The eternal reign of Christ as he sits on the throne and rules over all human history.

The unveiling of Christ in all of His glory

The exalted position of Christ & the Christ-centered essence of history

Hold fast to Christ with hope in a glorious future

Jesus is Lord of all

Christ is the righteous judge

Because Jesus is God, His plan will prevail. That plan is the destruction of the wicked, salvation of the saints, and Jesus on the throne.

The theme of God/Christ's victory

Jesus wins or some form of that

Be encouraged by the hope that Jesus will complete His redemptive work

In Christ we win!

Christ wins! We are assured that He will triumph over every enemy and will provide His people with the life of their dreams

The victory of Christ and the eternal security of believers

The Baby in the manger gave a whipping to the dragon in the nativity. Focused on the two kingdoms that Christmas calls us to choose sides.

God wins

We win, or the triumph of good over evil.

Overcoming sin & the stuff of life; God's invitation to the whole world

The theme of God's sovereignty

The plan of God for the future, eternal kingdom, and impact on our faith and conduct.

God has a plan for the future & His people are safe amid the troubles of life. Q: What is the fate of believers during the terrible things described? A: God protects & preserves

God's care, plan & victory for his people in trials

God's sovereignty would be the overall theme.

The sovereignty of God over all the powers of men & supernatural entities (angels).

Though the wrong seems oft so strong God is the ruler yet.

Sovereignty of God over evil and nations

The sovereignty of God

God is in control; What you do with Jesus Christ determines what your present & future will be like.

The sovereignty of God as He concludes in time and on earth what He began in time and on earth.

God's plan for the end times unveiled

The theme of heaven

Heaven

Glory of Heaven

The good life in living perfectly in the presence of God; Jesus last words should be taken seriously because He is coming soon to personally fulfill them.

The end of our world and the beginning of the new creation

Ultimate healing

The theme of judgment/second coming

Judgment

Final judgment and heaven

Live obedient lives in the light of the Lord's coming

There will be a judgment for non believers – the lake of fire; there will be a new heaven and a new earth for believers; Jesus is coming soon.

In 1999, I preached a series of sermons on the end times (one per month) to give people a clear picture of Biblical texts in light of the Y2K scare.

The theme of hope/encouragement

Hope in the resurrection

Heaven, New Earth, Living hope in Christ

The believer's future hope detailed

Hope in Christ will materialize at his second coming; Faithful till the end for God keeps his promises

Comfort for believers facing opposition

God is faithful through tough & trying times

The power of the gospel and the need for perseverance

The theme of church

Capsule: Responsibility of the church to remain faithful, doctrinal sound, complete the great commission

Maintaining a faithful witness to Jesus Christ despite persecution and temptation.

Themes identified in specific chapters

Chapter 1:18 – Our desire to conquer death is possible through Christ

Chapter 4 & 5 Worship is a expression of who God is and what He does

Chapter 15 Christmas is a key battle in the ongoing cosmic war between God & Satan
(*NOTE: This individual stated on question #17 they had preached on Rev. 12 not 15 so their answer to question #20 is taken as a reference to Rev. 12.)

Chapter. 5 = Trusting in God's will; Chapter. 21 The glorious hope of eternal life

Chapter. 11 = The church operating in the Spirit of Christ is all about righteousness and justice in these last days. Chap. 21 = God's eternal presence with us in Christ.

Revelation 12:10-12 Defeating the Devil; Rev. 19:6-10 You're Invited

Chapter. 21 Eternal life in the New Jerusalem; Chapter. 22 Imminent return

The themes identified by the respondents demonstrate the wide variety of motifs seen within Revelation. What is impressive in these results is the fairly consistent presentation of Jesus Christ as it relates to the respective theme identified, be it worship, the sovereignty of God, or the church. This demonstrates the commitment of those surveyed to presenting Christ-centered messages within the parameters of Revelation. By presenting Christ in Revelation the preacher is able to display a depth and dimension of Jesus not available anywhere else in Scripture.

Question 21 was a question with a three part answer based on the Likert scale. Because of the way the question was asked the results will be shared in three parts. The full question is printed below including the possible answers.

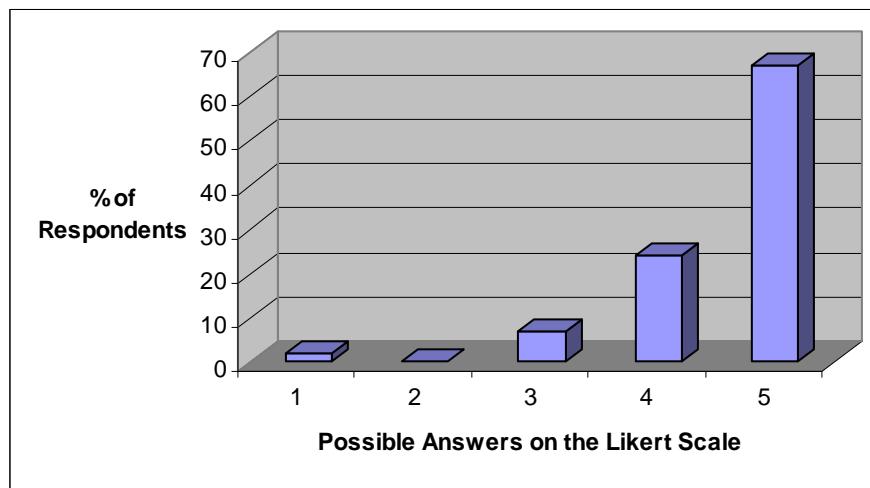
The following Likert scale was used to respond to questions #21-24.

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

21. Would you agree a Christ-centered sermon would consist of revealing one or more of the following?

The person of Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5
The work of Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5
The teaching of Jesus Christ	1	2	3	4	5

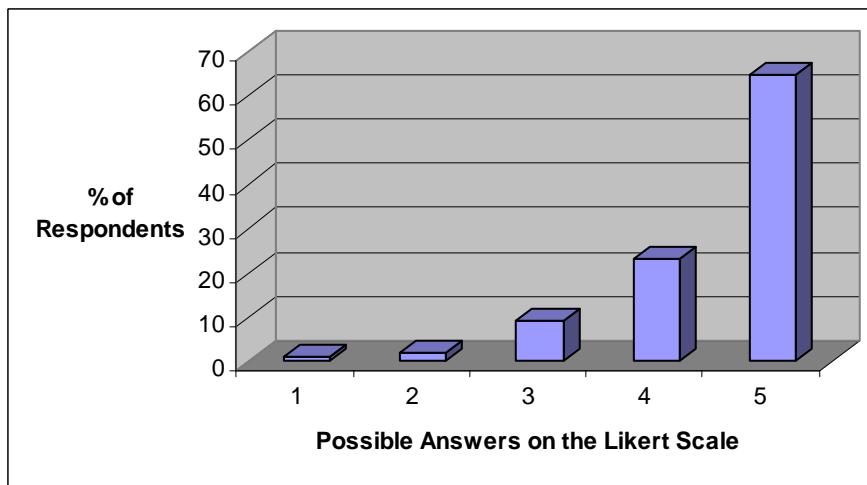
There were 123 responses to this question as it relates to *the person of Jesus Christ*. There were 2 respondents (2%) who strongly disagreed. There were 9 respondents (7%) who were neutral. There were 30 respondents (24%) who agreed. There were 82 respondents (67%) who strongly agreed.



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	2	2%
(2) Disagree	0	0%
(3) Neutral	9	7%
(4) Agree	30	24%

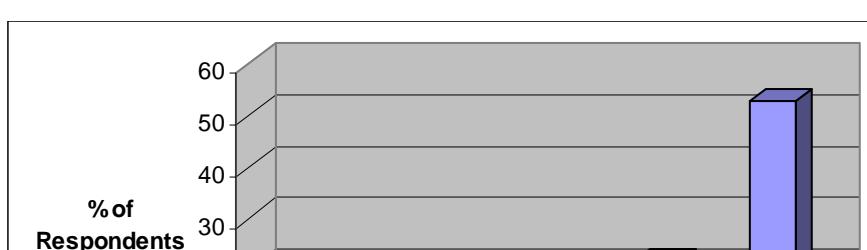
(5) Strongly Agree	82	67%
Total	123	100%

There were 123 responses to question 21 as it relates to *the work of Jesus Christ*. There was one respondent (1%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were two respondents (2%) who “disagreed.” There were 11 respondents (9%) who were “neutral.” There were 29 respondents (23%) who “agreed.” There were 80 respondents (65%) who “strongly agreed.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	1	1%
(2) Disagree	2	2%
(3) Neutral	11	9%
(4) Agree	29	23%
(5) Strongly Agree	80	65%
Total	123	100%

There were 123 responses to question 21 as they related to *the teaching of Jesus Christ*. There were 3 respondents (2%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 5 respondents (4%) who “disagreed.” There were 23 respondents (19%) who were “neutral.” There were 27 respondents (22%) who “agreed.” There were 65 respondents (53%) who “strongly agreed.”



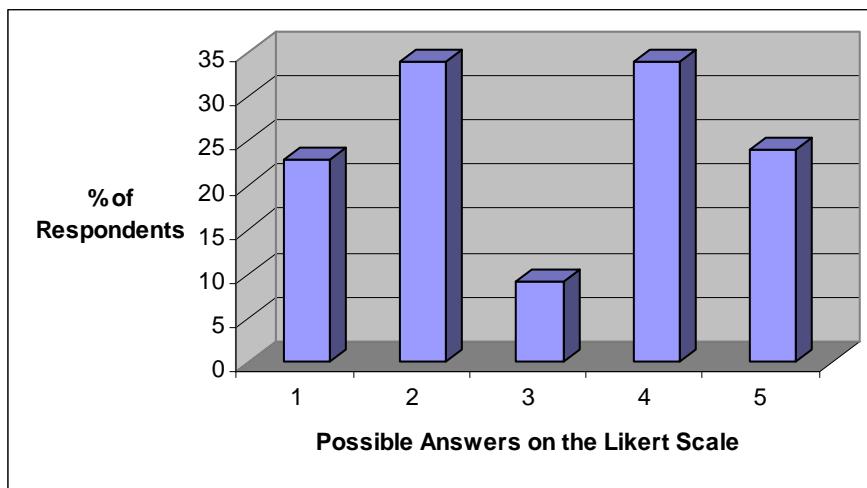
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	3	2%
(2) Disagree	5	4%
(3) Neutral	23	19%
(4) Agree	27	22%
(5) Strongly Agree	65	53%
Total	123	100%

By using the *Likert* scale on question 21 I was able to identify from the respondents an opinion that strongly agreed as to what would actually consist of a Christ-centered sermon. When the “agree” response was combined with “strongly agree” a sound majority was identified not lower than 75% and reaching as high as 91%. The results from question 21 indicate not only the strong commitment of the survey respondents to preaching Christ-centered sermons but they also express the belief in how this can be accomplished.

Question 22 also called for a response based on the Likert scale.

22. Would you agree a sermon is still Christ-centered if it brings out the redemptive work of God without specifically mentioning the person, work, or teaching of Jesus Christ? 1 2 3 4 5

There were 124 responses to this question. There were 23 respondents (19%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 34 respondents (27%) who disagreed. There were 9 respondents (7%) who were neutral. There were 34 respondents (28%) who agreed. There were 24 respondents (19%) who strongly disagreed.



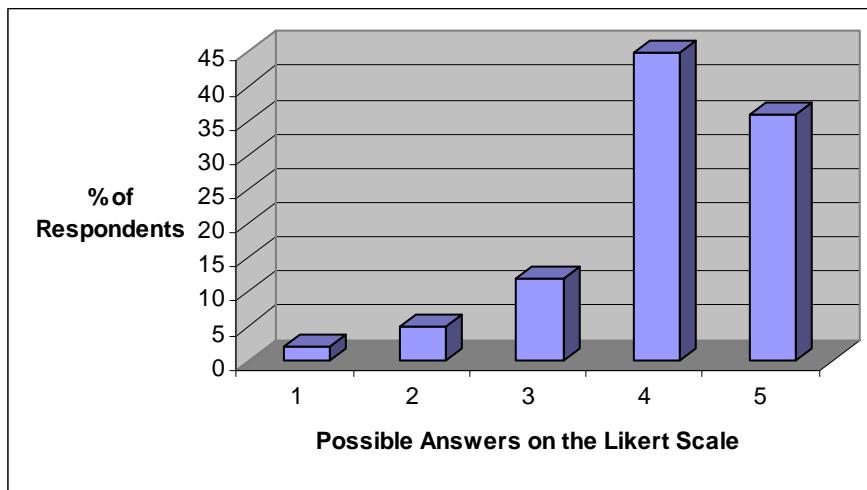
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	23	19%
(2) Disagree	34	27%
(3) Neutral	9	7%
(4) Agree	34	28%
(5) Strongly Agree	24	19%
Total	124	100%

While a sound majority agreed what consists of a Christ-centered sermon the respondents were evenly divided as to whether a sermon would still be considered Christ-centered if the redemptive work of God was brought out without specifically mentioning the person, work, or teaching of Jesus Christ. This response is more evenly divided than the response given in question number five which indicated a slight majority (56%) felt a Christ-centered sermon is different than a Theo-centric sermon.

23. Would you agree that worship is a dominant theme in Revelation?

1 2 3 4 5

There were 120 responses to this question. There were 3 respondents (3%) who strongly disagreed. There were 3 respondents (2%) who strongly disagreed. There were 6 respondents (5%) who disagreed. There were 14 respondents (12%) who were “neutral.” There were 54 respondents (45%) who “agreed.” There were 43 respondents (36%) who “strongly agreed.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	3	2%
(2) Disagree	6	5%
(3) Neutral	14	12%
(4) Agree	54	45%
(5) Strongly Agree	43	36%
Total	120	100%

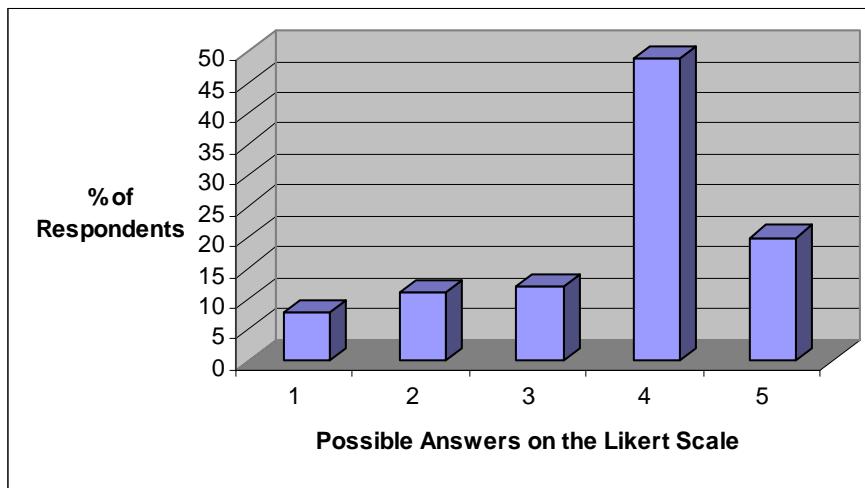
The results of this question demonstrate those who have preached from Revelation have seen worship as a dominant theme in its pages. The presence of this theme within the book indicates the possibility of its use as a motif for an expository sermon series beyond chapter three.

Question 24 was also a multiple part question involving seven separate categories. To assist the reader each category will be emphasized with its respective results.

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The genre of literature of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 91 responses to this question. Of these responses there were 7 respondents (8%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 10 respondents (11%) who “disagreed.” There were 11 respondents (12%) who were neutral. There were 45 respondents (49%) who “agreed.” And there were 18 respondents (20%) who “strongly agreed.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	7	8%
Disagree	10	11%
Neutral	11	12%

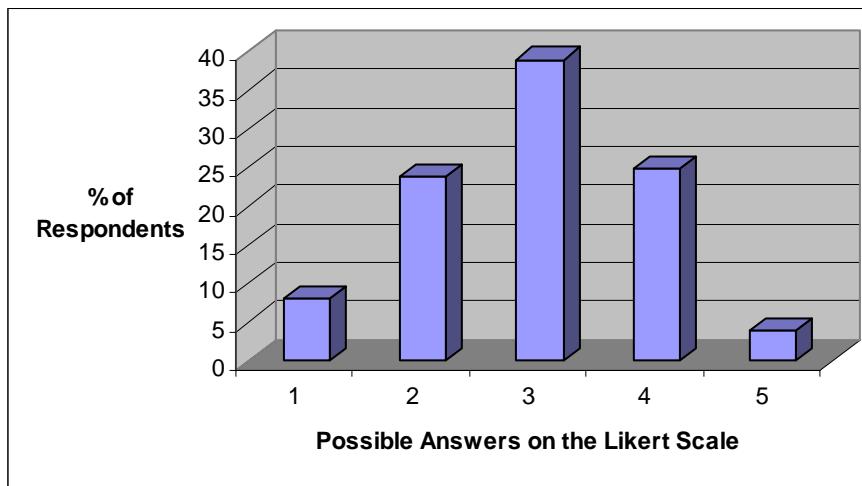
Agree	45	49%
Strongly Agree	18	20%
Total	91	100%

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The grammar of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 91 respondents to this question. Of those 91 there were 7 responses (8%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 22 responses (24.2%) who

“disagreed.” There were 35 responses (38.5%) that were “neutral.” There were 23 responses (25.3%) who “agreed.” There were 4 responses (4%) who “strongly agreed.”



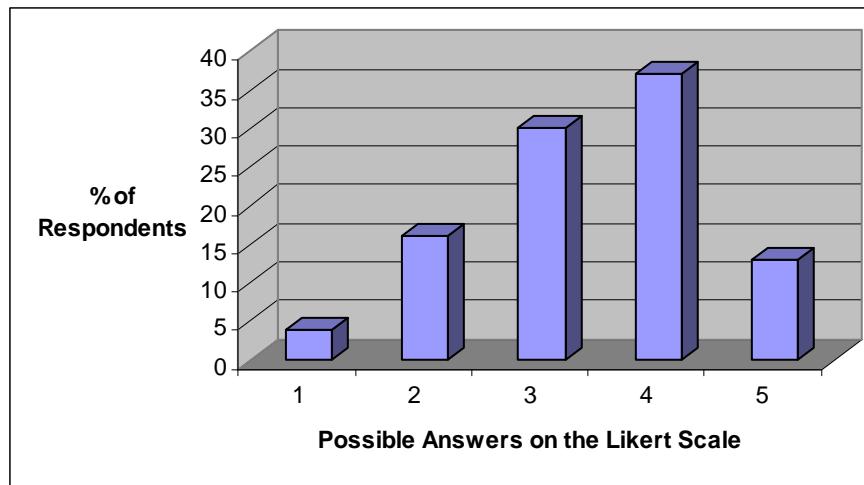
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) = Strongly Disagree	7	8%
(2) = Disagree	22	24%
(3) = Neutral	35	39%
(4) = Agree	23	25%
(5) = Strongly Agree	4	4%
Total	91	100%

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The literary structure of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 90 responses to this question. Of the 90 there were 4 responses (4%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 14 responses (16%) who “disagreed.”

There were 27 responses (30%) that were “neutral.” There were 33 responses (37%) who “agreed.” There were 12 responses (13%) who “strongly agreed.”



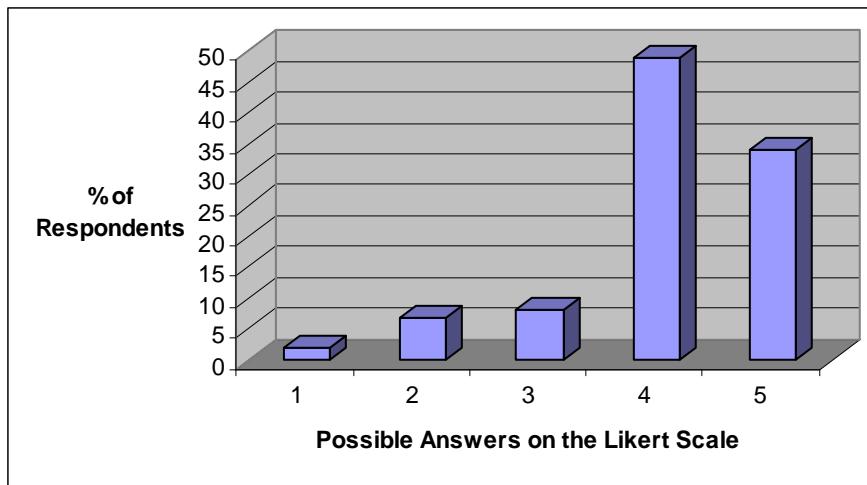
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	4	4%
(2) Disagree	14	16%
(3) Neutral	27	30%
(4) Agree	33	37%
(5) Strongly Agree	12	13%
Total	90	100%

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The symbols used in the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 91 responses to this question. Of the 91 responses there were 2 (2%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 6 responses (7%) who “disagreed.”

There were 7 responses (8%) that were “neutral.” There were 45 responses (49%) who “agreed.” There were 31 responses (34%) who “strongly agreed.”



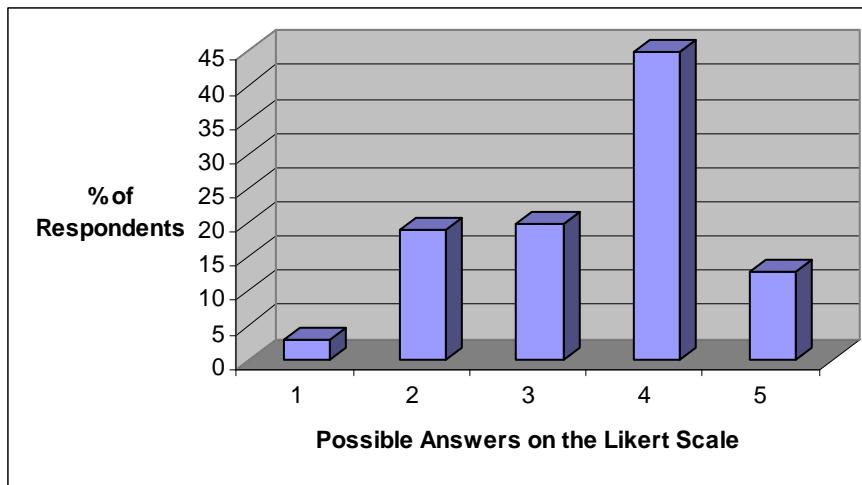
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	2	2%
(2) Disagree	6	7%
(3) Neutral	7	8%
(4) Agree	45	49%
(5) Strongly Agree	31	34%
Total	91	100%

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The terminology used in the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 91 responses to this question. Of those 91 responses there were 3 (3%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 17 responses (19%) who “disagreed.”

There were 18 responses (20%) that were “neutral.” There were 41 responses (45%) who “agreed.” There were 12 responses (13%) who “strongly agreed.”



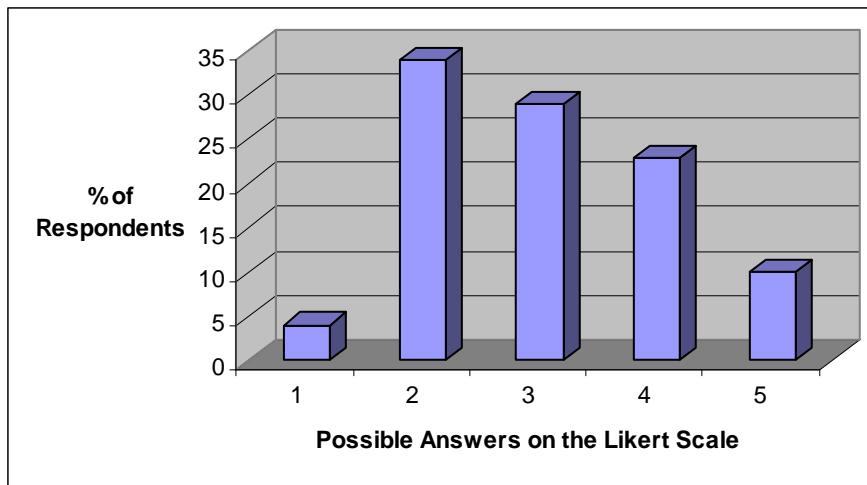
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	3	3%
(2) Disagree	17	19%
(3) Neutral	18	20%
(4) Agree	41	45%
(5) Strongly Agree	12	13%
Total	91	100%

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The theology of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 91 responses to this question. There were 4 respondents (4%) who “strongly disagreed.” There were 31 respondents (34%) who “disagreed.”

There were 26 respondents (29%) that were “neutral.” There were 21 respondents (23%) who “agreed.” There were 9 respondents (10%) who “strongly agreed.”



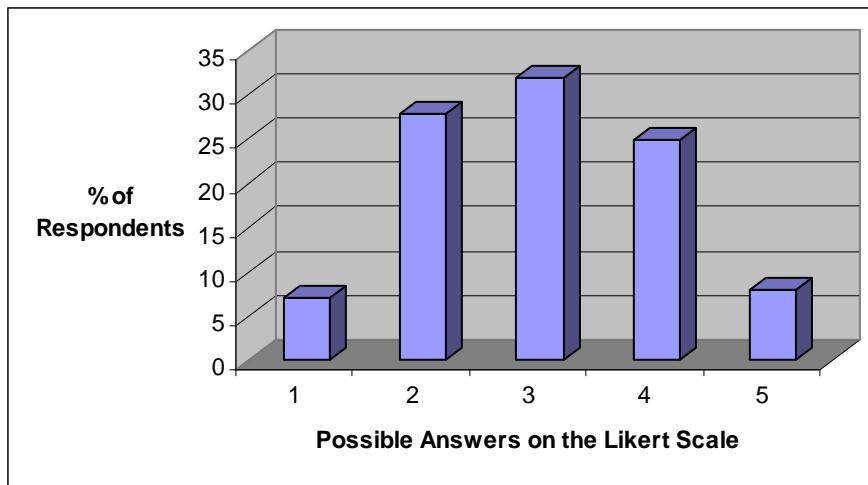
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	4	4%
(2) Disagree	31	34%
(3) Neutral	26	29%
(4) Agree	21	23%
(5) Strongly Agree	9	10%
Total	91	100%

24. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories make the exegesis of your passage difficult?

The use of the Old Testament in the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 90 responses to this question. Of those responses 6 (7%) “strongly disagreed.” There were 25 responses (28%) who “disagreed.” There were

29 responses (32%) that were “neutral.” There were 23 responses (25%) who “agreed.” There were 7 responses (8%) who “strongly agreed.”



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Strongly Disagree	6	7%
(2) Disagree	25	28%
(3) Neutral	29	32%
(4) Agree	23	25%
(5) Strongly Agree	7	8%
Total	90	100%

The results from question (24) provide valuable insight on the challenges of preaching from Revelation. Of the seven categories listed four stood out with a combined majority of respondents who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the question. The largest majority was when a combined total of (83%) of the respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” the symbols in Revelation provided

the most difficulty to doing exegesis. The second largest response of (69%) either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” the genre of Revelation proved to be a challenge to doing exegesis. The third category was regarding the terminology of Revelation with (58%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing this made exegesis difficult. The last category found (50%) of the respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” the literary structure of Revelation made exegesis difficult.

The results of these questions help clarify why Revelation chapters 4-22 are not preached from as often as chapters two and three. While chapters two and three pose their own challenges—it is understandable why their epistle qualities make them more appealing to develop into a sermon series as opposed to the heavy use of symbols and unique genre that are found beyond chapter three.

Question 25 also used the Likert scale. The difference between question 25 and questions 21 through 24 is in regards to the nature of the question and the responses attached to the respective numbers on the scale. Question 25 and the instructions as they appeared on the survey are given below.

For question #25 please use the following *Likert* scale to complete your answer.
1= None; 2= Little Influence; 3= Some; 4= Considerable; 5= Strongly Influenced.

25. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories influence your choice of preaching texts?

Curiosity of church members about Revelation	1	2	3	4	5
Current events in the social/natural/political world	1	2	3	4	5
Lectionary	1	2	3	4	5
Personal study of Revelation beyond chapters 2, 3	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

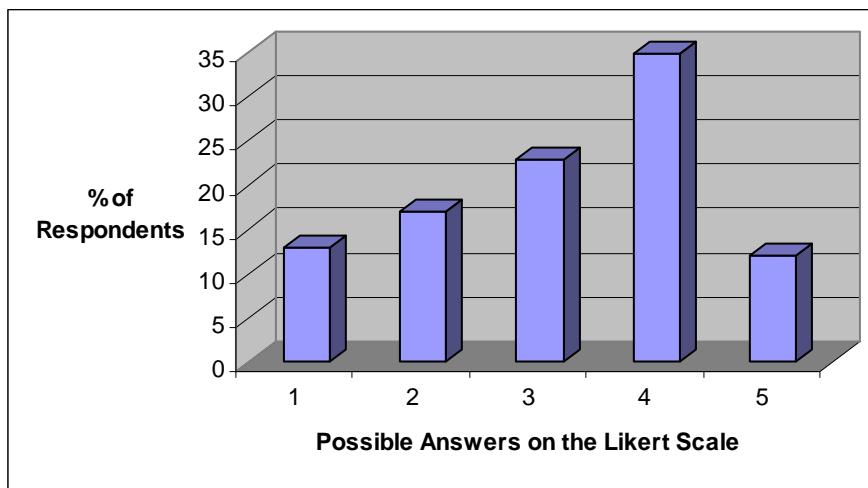
25. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories influence your choice of preaching texts?

Curiosity of church members about Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

There were 90 responses. There were 12 responses (13%) answered “none.”

There were 15 responses (17%) who said there was “little influence.” There were 21 responses (23%) answered “some.” There were 31 responses (35%) who answered

“considerable influence.” There were 11 responses (12%) who said the curiosity of the church members had “strongly influenced” them.



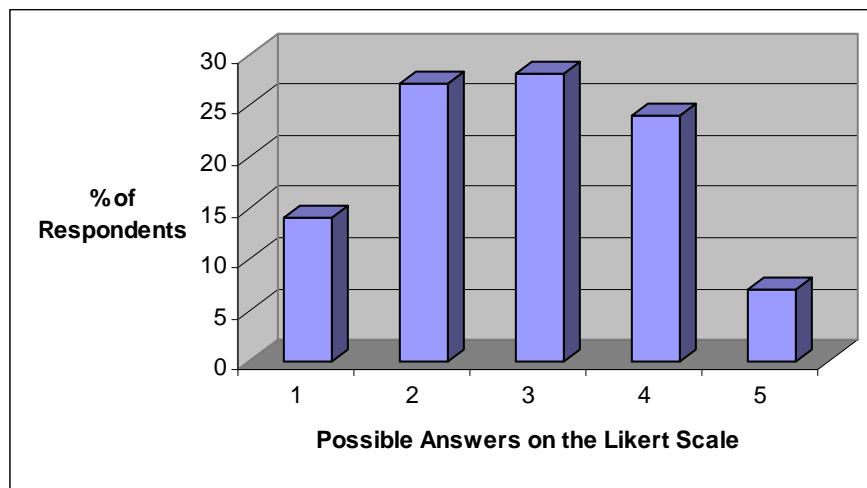
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1 = None	12	13%
2 = Little Influence	15	17%
3 = Some	21	23%
4 = Considerable Influence	31	35%
5 = Strongly Influenced	11	12%
Total	90	100%

25. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories influence your choice of preaching texts?

Current events in the social/natural/political world 1 2 3 4 5

There were 90 responses. There were 13 responses (14%) who answered “none.” There were 24 responses (27%) who said current events had “little” influence. There were 25 responses (28%) who said current events had “some”

influence. There were 22 responses (24%) who said current events had “considerable influence.” There were 6 responses (7%) who said current events had “strongly influenced” them.



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1 = None	13	14%
2 = Little Influence	24	27%
3 = Some Influence	25	28%
4 = Considerable Influence	22	24%
5 = Strongly Influenced	6	7%
Total	90	100%

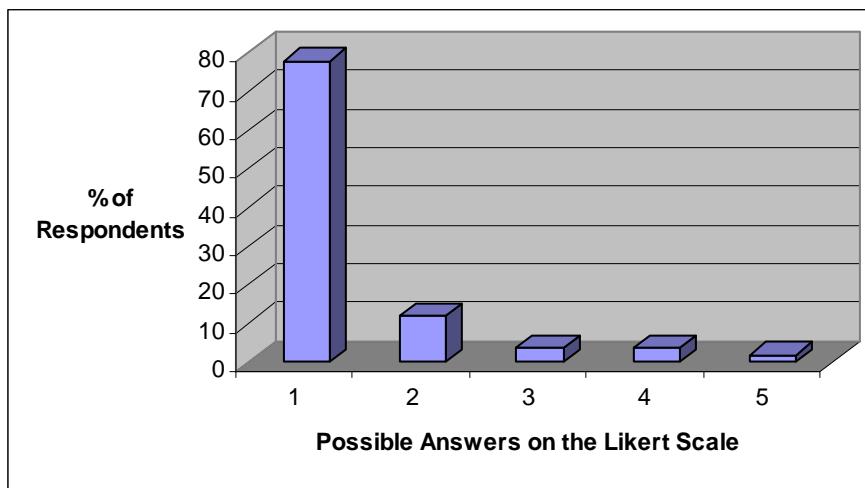
25. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories influence your choice of preaching texts?

Lectionary

1 2 3 4 5

There were 90 responses to this question. There were 69 responses (78%) who answered “none.” There were 11 responses (12%) who answered a “little influence.” There were 4 responses (4%) who said the lectionary had “some”

influence. There were 4 respondents (4%) who said the lectionary provided “considerable influence.” There were 2 respondents (2%) who said they were “strongly influenced” by the lectionary.



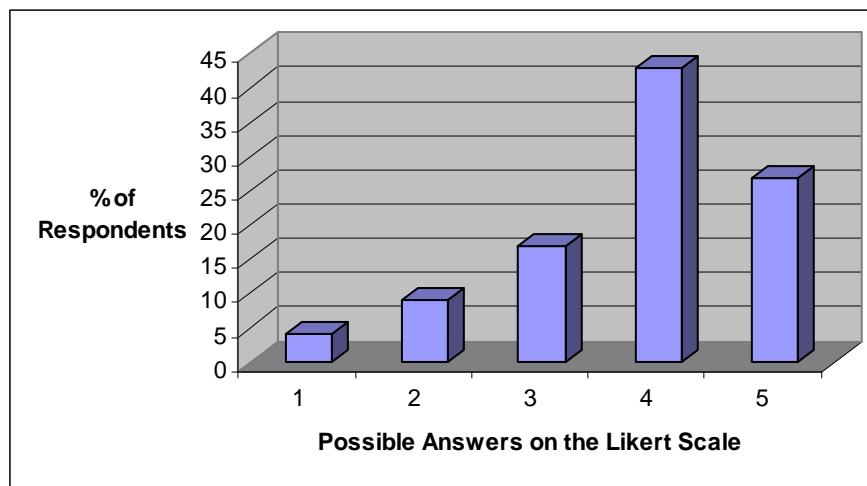
Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1 = None	69	78%
2 = Little Influence	11	12%
3 = Some	4	4%
4 = Considerable Influence	4	4%
5 = Strongly Influenced	2	2%
Total	90	100%

25. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories influence your choice of preaching texts?

Personal study of Revelation beyond chapters 2, 3 1 2 3 4 5

There were 90 responses. There were 4 respondents (4%) who answered “none.” There were 8 respondents (9%) who answered “little influence.” There were 15 respondents (17%) who answered “some.” There were 39 respondents (43%) who

answered “considerable influence.” There were 24 respondents (27%) who said they were “strongly influenced” by their personal study of Revelation.



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1 = None	4	4%
2 = Little Influence	8	9%
3 = Some	15	17%
4 = Considerable Influence	39	43%
5 = Strongly Influenced	24	27%
Total	90	100%

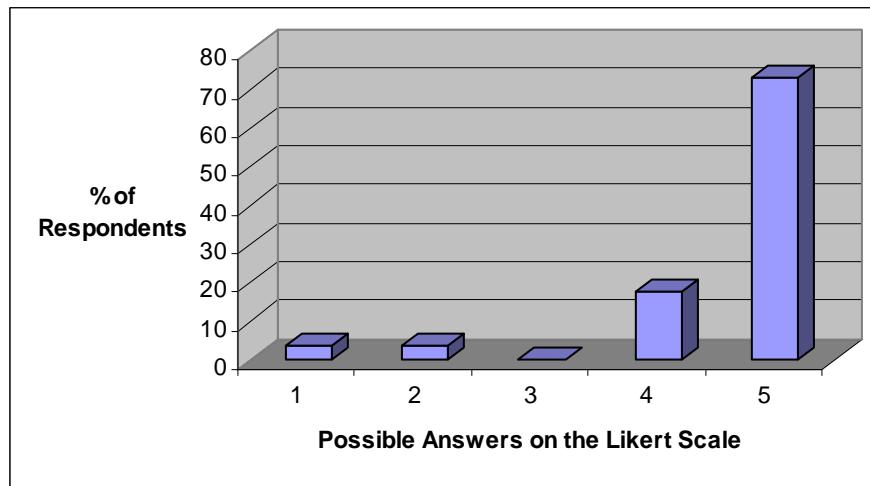
25. If you have preached outside of Revelation chapters two and three to what degree did the following categories influence your choice of preaching texts?

Other: _____ **1 2 3 4 5**

There were 22 responses to this question. There was one respondent (5%) who answered “none.” There was one respondent (5%) who answered “little influence.” There were four respondents (18%) who said there was some influence.

There were 16 respondents (73%) who said their answer had a “strong influence.”

The specific responses are listed below.



Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1 = None	1	4%
2 = Little Influence	1	4%
3 = Some	0	0%
4 = Considerable Influence	4	18%
5 = Strongly Influenced	16	73%
Total	22	100%

Listed below are the various topics identified by the respondents for survey question #25 part five which allowed the respondent to fill in the blank as to what specifically influenced them to preach from the book of Revelation beyond chapter three. These topics are listed under the respective *Likert* scale number and its corresponding degree of influence the respondent assigned to them

Likert scale #1 = None

Specific interest in heaven

The calendar, the change of millennium (2000).

Whole counsel of God

The need for the church to hear/understand God's message in relation to their faithful living today.

Topical sermon series worship, doctrinal series → Heaven

The power of various passages

Likert scale #2 = Little influence

Interest

Likert scale #4 = Considerable influence

Focus on person of Christ

Staff assignment

Needs of the Church

Preaching calendar

Likert scale #5 = Strongly Influence

Timely word for our church

Needs within the church to which Revelation speaks

Concern over misunderstanding of the book & desire to proclaim its rich theology

My desire to have a better understanding of the book

My people need the hope of heaven

The goal of making it readable

Motivate believers to evangelize lost & live obediently before Lord comes

The theme of suffering & redemption along with worship of the Lamb

Funeral

Theology—inspiration covering all the books of the Bible; and Rev. is an important book & one of its kind.

Clarifying the meaning of Revelation in light of current trends; eg. Left Behind, Y2K

My own interest

What I felt would bless the church and help the members grow in the love and knowledge of God.

Finding David S. Clark's "The Message from Patmos"

Praying it through and sensing this is where our congregation needs to be...

Participation in ongoing series

Of the five categories listed in question (25) only one (the category of "other") had a strong majority of respondents (73%) who said they were "strongly influenced" by the response they gave. What seems to run consistently through the reasons why preachers preach Revelation is the overall attractiveness the book—specifically it's rich theology and its relevance for the church today. These answers also demonstrate an attempt on the part of the preacher to rescue the book's overall message from the sensationalism that often accompanies it and at times overwhelms Revelation's Christ-centered message.

The Summary of the Survey

The survey results show the respondents were male with an average age of 46 years. The respondents also had considerable pulpit experience with an overall average of 18 years. A strong majority of the respondents believed every sermon should be Christ-centered yet drew a distinction between a Christ-centered sermon

and a Theo-centric sermon. Regarding the general interpretation of Revelation, (48%) of the respondents believe the futurist is the best way to understand the book.

While scholars believe more preaching is done on Revelation chapters two and three then the rest of the book the survey showed only a slight distinction between those who preached chapter two and three (77%), from those who preached beyond chapter three (72%). However, the survey did indicate a sharp drop from those who preached a sermon series in chapters two and three (73%) from those who did a series beyond chapter three (45%). In addition, the survey was able to identify the chapters most favored by preachers beyond chapter three. The most popular was chapter 21 with (65%) of the respondents saying so. The second most popular was chapter 22 with (55%) of the respondents saying so. These are the only two chapters to score over half. The next most popular were chapters 19 and 20 tied at (48%). This particular fact is noted because even though nearly half of the respondents preached from chapter 20 which is on the millennium over three quarters of the respondents or (77%) said a specific opinion of the millennium is not necessary in order to preach from Revelation.

The number of sermons preached beyond chapter three ranged from (1-48). This wide range was broken down further into smaller categories. The category with the highest frequency of sermons preached in a series beyond chapter three was in the 1-10 sermon range. However, (53%) of the respondents to this question said they preached five or less sermons within this range.

92% of the respondents said there was a specific theme identified in the text they preached on that was brought out in the sermon. When asked to identify this

theme eight general categories were identified. The two most popular can be summarized as “worship” and “Jesus Christ.” Clearly the themes of “worship” and “Jesus” are readily recognized within Revelation.

When asked what consisted of a Christ-centered sermon 91% either agreed or strongly agreed it consisted of the person of Jesus Christ; 88% agreed or strongly agreed it consisted of the work of Jesus Christ; and 75% agreed or strongly agreed it consisted of the teaching of Jesus Christ. Apparently there is discrepancy as to what actually constitutes a Christ-centered sermon. Only 46% agreed or strongly agreed a sermon was still Christ-centered if the redemptive work of God was brought out in the sermon without mentioning the person, work, or teaching of Jesus Christ.

There were 78% of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that worship was a dominant theme in the book of Revelation. This response correlates with the verbal answers given in response to question 20.

The survey was also able to identify what gave the preacher the greatest difficulty when doing exegesis beyond chapter three. Four of the seven categories listed were said to have made exegesis difficult. The most difficult category was the “symbols” with (83%) of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. In addition, a combined (69%) who either agreed or strongly agreed that the genre of literature of Revelation made the exegesis of their passage difficult. There were (58%) who agreed or strongly agreed the terminology used in Revelation made exegesis difficult. Finally, there was a combined (50%) who agreed or strongly agreed the literary structure gave them difficulty when doing exegesis. Clearly this portion of the survey

confirms the attempts to understand the symbolism in Revelation proves the most difficult.

Answers varied as to why preachers chose to preach beyond Revelation chapter three. There were 87% who acknowledged that personal study beyond chapter three had either some, considerable or strongly influenced them to preach beyond chapter three. There was a combined 70% who preached beyond Revelation chapter three either because of some, considerable, or strong influence by the curiosity of their church members about the book. A combined 59% were influenced to preach beyond Revelation chapter three due to current events in the social/natural/political world. However, only 10% of those who preached beyond chapter three said the lectionary had either some, considerable or strongly influenced them. While the last part of question 25 allowed for the respondent to fill in the blank there was only 16 respondents who did. But when identifying what influenced them there was a combined 91% who agreed that what influenced them to preach had either some, considerable or a strong influence on them to preach beyond chapter three. In fact 73% were strongly influenced by their answer to preach beyond chapter three.¹⁴⁴

The Conclusions from the Survey

This survey was used to assist in researching the thesis problem of developing a motif for preaching expository sermons on the theme of worship beyond chapter

¹⁴⁴ These answers are listed on page 110-111.

three in the book of Revelation. Based on the survey data the following conclusions are made.

The survey discovered that preachers who are committed to expository preaching do go beyond Revelation chapter three. However, a majority of those who preach beyond chapter three average a series of five sermons or less. In addition there are fewer preachers who journey into the central part of the book. This conclusion can be substantiated by the data which shows those who preach beyond chapter three tend to favor the last four chapters of the book over the previous fifteen (chapters 4-18). When an undue emphasis is placed only on the seven churches found in chapters two and three and-or the last four chapters (19-22) the proclamation of Revelation's overall message falls short. In order for the church to understand how it will be transformed from its pitiful condition described in chapters two and three to its glorified state in chapters 21 and 22 there needs to be an intentional effort made by expository preachers to preach these challenging passages found between these two sections. While it may not be easy it will not be without rewards.

While those who do preach beyond chapter three often preach the theme of worship which is present in this portion of Revelation, particularly chapters four and five, the question is asked; is there more to the theme of worship in Revelation then what is found even in chapters four and five? Other chapters exhibiting scenes of worship or having a specific emphasis on that theme can be found in chapters 7, 11, 13, 14, and 15. While the survey results shows these chapters were preached from, they were significantly less then the more popular chapters beyond chapter three such as 4, 5, 12, 19, 20, 21, and 22 (see page 71, 72).

At this point the survey results may be helpful to understanding why this may be. The four most challenging areas to doing exegesis when preparing sermons beyond chapter three were: symbols, genre, terminology, and structure. Chapters 7, 11, 13, 14, 15 are all greatly effected by these categories. For example, there is a heavy use of symbols and new terminology within these chapters. In addition these chapters occur after the genre of the book has taken a dramatic shift from its epistle qualities to a more apocalyptic quality. Finally there is the overall structure of the book which centers itself among chapters 13 and 14.

Based on the survey results the conclusion made is that there is a need for a tool to assist those committed to preaching expository sermons beyond Revelation chapter three. The purpose of this thesis project will be to develop that tool to demonstrate how the motif of Christ-centered worship beyond Revelation chapter three can be developed into an expository sermon series.

CHAPTER FIVE: THESIS PROJECT

The study of the book of Revelation is both broad and deep, ranging in categories from commentaries to exegetical handbooks to theological reflections. But

when looking for resources on how to actually preach Revelation the selections¹⁴⁵ often feature the finished sermon—in either a written or outlined form. But what these resources often lack is a more detailed explanation of how the authors developed their sermon.

The goal of my project is to bridge this current gap in the literature in several ways. I will present and explain eleven steps necessary for developing an expository sermon series based on the theme of Christ-centered worship found in the book of Revelation. Because of the specialized focus of this project, only those steps necessary for discovering the main idea of the passage and shaping it into a basic outline will be emphasized. All the texts chosen for this series will be from beyond Revelation chapter three. In addition, the selection of the passages must contain the worship theme. They will also be from the chapters preached with the least frequency as identified by the thesis project survey. Finally, the steps used will provide a closer examination of the problems unique to preaching expository sermons in Revelation. The final section will be a conclusion.

Approach the Task with Prayer

It's been said that every journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.¹⁴⁶ The first step in preaching expository sermons in Revelation is not a question

¹⁴⁵ These are examples of what is available regarding homiletical instruction in Revelation. James L. Blevins, *Revelation Knox Preaching Guides*, ed. John H. Hayes (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1984); Robert E. Coleman, *Songs of Heaven*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1980); Joel Eidsness, "Lament for the City of Man," in *Biblical Sermons: How Twelve Preachers Apply the Principles of Biblical Preaching*, ed. Haddon W. Robinson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 1989); Gordon D. Fee, *On Preaching the Revelation*, The Builder Series (South Hamilton, MA: Ockenga Institute, 2004), CD Recording; Cornish R. Rogers, Joseph R. Jeter Jr., eds., *Preaching Through the Apocalypse: Sermons From Revelation* (Saint Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1992); Merrill C. Tenney, *The Book of Revelation*, Proclaiming the New Testament, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1963).

¹⁴⁶ This statement is attributed to Lao-Tzu, a Chinese philosopher.

of where to place one's foot, but rather where one should bend his knee. Preaching Scripture is a spiritual task. The apostle Paul wrote, "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God."¹⁴⁷ To preach God's word effectively you must ask for God's Spirit who alone can give understanding to the things of God. Therefore the first step in this journey is prayer.

The necessity of prayer for preparing to preach becomes all the more clearer upon examination of the record of pulpit giants from previous years. In his summary of the study and devotional habits of 22 outstanding Protestant preachers of both Great Britain and the United States from the 18th – 20th centuries Harold L. Calkins states, "In evaluating the evidence produced and the field covered in this study, no clear-cut pattern is discernable in the devotional habits of these renowned pulpитеers save that of unusual application to Bible study and prayer, each one following a program suited to his individual needs and background."¹⁴⁸ Calkins noted that, of the 22 preachers surveyed, educational background was not the differentiating factor that made them exceptional. Instead Calkins adds, "One remarkable observation stands out, and that is that unschooled, unlettered men and men of profound learning achieved their eminence apparently only in the measure of their consecration to the ministry of God's grace to men."¹⁴⁹ According to Calkins a heart and mind

¹⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:11, NKJV.

¹⁴⁸ Harold L. Calkins, *Master Preachers: Their Study and Devotional Habits* (Alma Park, Great Britain: The Stanborough Press, 1986), 123.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 123.

consecrated by prayer can do more for the preacher than a list of letters after one's name. Jon Paulien clarifies this point further stating:

Without a teachable spirit, it doesn't matter how much Greek you know or how many Ph.D.s you accumulate. Your learning will not open the Word to you. True knowledge of God does not come from merely intellectual pursuit or academic study. It arises from a willingness to receive the truth no matter what the cost.¹⁵⁰

This reflection should be an encouragement to those who desire to preach Revelation but lack the depth of formal education. Let there be no doubt, theological training can be beneficial to the preaching task, but the greatest need is not letters after one's name but a heart that is humble before God. This can only be achieved through prayer.

This need for prayer becomes vital for the preacher of Revelation because of what is at stake when preaching God's word—the proclamation of the truth—no matter what the cost. To search out the meaning and application of Revelation for a 21st century audience Paulien suggests this prayer: "Lord, I want the truth about the book of Revelation no matter what it demands of me personally."¹⁵¹ The importance of this prayer becomes more significant when considering the original setting of Revelation's audience. Revelation was sent to seven churches facing conflict both from within and without. For these seven churches to be effective witnesses, it was absolutely critical for the leadership to sit up and take notice of what was being said to them so they could make the necessary corrections. This required both humility to

¹⁵⁰ Jon Paulien, *The Deep Things of God: An Insider's Guide to the Book of Revelation*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 2004), 81.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 82.

receive the message and the courage to act upon it—regardless of the social pressures one faced. Today’s church faces challenges similar to what the seven churches of Revelation experienced. For today’s preacher of Revelation, Paulien advises, to pray for humility to receive the truth, and the courage to act upon that truth no matter what it may cost him personally. Therefore the first step in preparing to preach from the pages of Revelation must be to consecrate oneself by prayer, not only at the beginning of the process but throughout the entire experience.

Reading Revelation to Understand It

Preaching a sermon series from a particular book of the Bible requires the grasp of the entire book. Revelation is no exception. But how can this be accomplished? To gain comprehension of any book of the Bible there is no substitute for reading it in its entirety. Hans K. LaRondelle acknowledges this point writing, “The Apocalypse is meant to be read as a whole, so that its movement from beginning till the end can make its full impact on our minds and hearts.”¹⁵² This was John’s intention stated in the prologue of his book.¹⁵³

You may be tempted to read commentaries and other works during this step but this must be avoided. Fred Craddock echoes this thought stating:

First of all, immerse yourself in the text of Revelation as a whole. Without any aids to understanding, read the book in huge portions at a time. Read at times aloud, sensing what the first as well as the present congregation think and feel during the hearing of it.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible: The Biblical-Contextual Approach*, (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 82.

¹⁵³ Revelation 1:3.

¹⁵⁴ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching the Book of Revelation*, Interpretation, vol. XL, no. 3, 279.

By doing this the preacher experiences the text for himself firsthand. Then when the time comes to pursue the counsel of others you will be ready to engage with their thoughts because of your own fluency with the book.

How many times should the book be read? This depends upon several factors including how far in advance you are preparing to preach, and your weekly to do list. Consider this standard practiced by G. Campbell Morgan, one of the most respected expository preachers of the 19th and 20th centuries.¹⁵⁵ Morgan preached entire books of the Bible. In discussing Morgan's preparation, Vines and Shaddix note that his means of research included the reading of "a book at least fifty times before starting his expository work."¹⁵⁶ Reading an entire text through fifty times may not fit into everyone's schedule, but in order to grasp the overall message of Revelation the preacher must take the initiative and read the book through repeatedly.

To gain the most from this exercise read with a pen and paper nearby so notes can be made. What works best for this assignment is a three ring binder with loose leaf paper. Assign a chapter of the book to each page, both front and back. If you fill up both sides of a page and wanted to continue taking notes on that chapter just add a new blank page.

Look for the following during the reading to gain the maximum benefit. First, observe the use of repetition, most notably the frequency of words. Revelation, like any other book of the Bible, often uses words, or phrases repeatedly. Some examples

¹⁵⁵ Calkins, *Master Preachers*, 54.

¹⁵⁶ Jerry Vines, and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 102.

of repetition would include the use of numbers, such as three, four, seven, twelve; and terms like angel, throne, and worship. Also, consider the context in which John used these numbers, such as the three angels, or the twenty-four thrones. Identify in your notes the chapter and verse where they are found. How frequently do they appear within a particular literary unit? These are the types of observations to make during this initial reading of the book. One word of encouragement: the more times you read the book the more questions you will have because you will grow more familiar with each reading of the text. Then when you read the commentaries you will find it much easier to refer back to both your questions and discoveries.

Observe where the symbols are being used throughout the book. Although Revelation was written as a letter to seven churches, John used symbols as a way to communicate his ideas regarding the nature of the conflict the churches were either facing or were about to face. Of the survey respondents 83% either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that John’s use of symbols made the exegesis of Revelation difficult. Preachers acknowledge that John’s use of symbols pose one of the greatest challenges to exegeting Revelation. Therefore, identify the chapter and verses where the symbols appear and record what you think John was saying.

Give attention to the variety of genres in the book. The survey said 69% of the respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” the genre of the book of Revelation made exegesis difficult. This becomes evident as the reader advances through the book. Within chapter one the reader encounters an epistle-like greeting that transitions to a vision witnessed by John. The second and third chapters are written as epistles only to change again in chapter four. The point I’m making is how

John varies the literary genres in order to communicate his overall message. Here again, make note of these transitions and where they take place. Ask, “why a different genre was used and what John was trying to say?”

Another category that proved challenging to the survey respondents was the terminology John uses in Revelation. 58% either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” the terminology used in the book of Revelation made exegesis difficult. Some examples would include the seals, trumpets, bowls, and beasts. This refers not simply to how many seals or trumpets but instead how is John using these words. Therefore, make note of what terms are used and where, and what is the surrounding context in which they are being used during this initial reading.

The literary structure of Revelation can also be challenging when preparing sermons. The survey identified 50% of those who preached beyond Revelation chapter three either agreed or strongly agreed the book’s literary structure made exegesis difficult.¹⁵⁷ LaRondelle recognizes this challenge in Revelation stating, “Because its literary arrangement and theological message are interwoven, a knowledge of its architectural design contributes substantially to our understanding of its message.”¹⁵⁸ The proposed reading is one means to assist in understanding Revelation’s structure. What should the preacher look for with regards it’s structure? Consider La Rondelle’s observation, “John conveys its unity by his construction of a symmetrical pattern, an inverse parallelism called a *chiasmus*.¹⁵⁹ While the

¹⁵⁷ See Chapter Four of this thesis project, 35.

¹⁵⁸ La Rondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, 82.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 82.

discussion continues over the exact divisions of this chiasm,¹⁶⁰ there are few arguments against the chiasm's presence.

First, note the correspondence between the prologue (Rev. 1:1-8) and the epilogue (Rev. 22:6-21).¹⁶¹ A similar association can also be found in the passages describing the promises made to the seven churches (Rev. 1:9-3:22) and their fulfillment in their counterpart, the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-22:5).¹⁶² In addition the seven trumpets and seven bowls¹⁶³ also exhibit a pattern of correspondence. When this careful study is made the preacher can see how its structure serves a purpose.

To gain any understanding of Revelation the reader must also have a familiarity with the Old Testament. Although there are no direct quotes or citations from the Old Testament, scholars are convinced of John's reliance on the Old Testament to communicate Revelation's message. These allusions to the Old Testament range from the Exodus story, to Babylon, and the beasts of Daniel. John refers to these stories in light of the New Testament Christ-event to demonstrate how God will ultimately deliver His people. In the preface to his commentary on Revelation, G. K. Beale's personal testimony acknowledges this, "I had already done some study on the use of the Old Testament in Revelation, and I believed that this

¹⁶⁰ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 108. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 32. Kenneth A. Strand, *The Open Gates of Heaven: A Brief Introduction to Literary Analysis of the Book of Revelation* (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, Inc., 1970), 42.

¹⁶¹ LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, 82.

¹⁶² Paulien, *The Deep Things of God*, 122-123.

¹⁶³ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 39.

was the key to understanding the book.”¹⁶⁴ Beale is not alone in this approach. La Rondelle writes, “The fact that Revelation refers over six hundred times to Old Testament history and its Hebrew images, suggests that the older Testament is the first key to unlock the book of Revelation.”¹⁶⁵ During this reading assignment keep track of any references to Old Testament passages. Several readings of Revelation coupled with a prior knowledge of the Old Testament with a good cross-referenced edition of the Bible will be most beneficial to making fresh observations before the heavy exegesis begins.

Also use a variety of translations while reading Revelation during this initial stage because it gives a broader understanding of the book’s overall message. Michaels writes, “The student approaching a particular passage must realize there is no substitute for careful reading and rereading of the whole book in Greek or in various translations.”¹⁶⁶ In addition to understanding the text it will help keep the exercise from becoming stale. Calkins, referring to H.M.S. Richards, a reputable preacher and evangelist said, “He considered each new translation an opportunity to find fresh nuances of meaning in God’s word.”¹⁶⁷ Although Calkins was emphasizing Richard’s annual devotional habit the principle remains true, new understanding can be gleaned from new readings. If you read through Revelation a

¹⁶⁴ G. K. Beale, xix.

¹⁶⁵ Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*, 91.

¹⁶⁶ J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, ed. Scot McKnight, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 51.

¹⁶⁷ Harold Calkins, *Master Preachers*, 121.

minimum of 12-16 times before going to the next step, you could easily use four different translations.

During the course of reading through Revelation you may want to become more familiar with apocalyptic literature in general. If you have access to these resources and the available time you can start by reading non-canonical Jewish and Christian literature. However, if your time and resources are limited you can find this genre within the Bible itself. These texts would be Daniel, Isaiah 24-27, Zechariah 9-14, Mark 13, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, and 2 Peter 3:3-13.¹⁶⁸

Outline the Book

After gathering notes from several readings creating an outline of the book should be the next step. One purpose for outlining is to help remove any blind spots that may have developed during the reading. A tendency during Bible reading is to gloss over difficult passages in preference for favorites ones. Outlining leaves very little wiggle room for doing this. Instead, it makes you think critically about what verse goes where and give proper value to every verse. This step is crucial to the exegetical process because after reading the book you may want to select your passages. But it's too early. Craddock writes, "Make an original rough outline of Revelation. This will not be easy because of cycles of material and repetitions, but in the struggle to do this, confidence begins to grow and tentative selections for sermons start to form."¹⁶⁹ While this assignment can intimidate at first if you were diligent in

¹⁶⁸ Craddock, *Preaching the Book of Revelation*, 280.

¹⁶⁹ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching the Book of Revelation*, 280.

your reading it will start to pay off. Consider for a moment G. Campbell Morgan's habit of reading a book at least 50 times before preaching it. According to Calkins, the purpose of Morgan's intensive reading was to outline it more accurately.¹⁷⁰

The benefits of outlining can be more readily appreciated when working in Revelation because of how it assists in understanding the overall literary context of the selected passage. Fee states, "To determine the literary context of any vision, you must first work out for yourself an adequate frame of reference for the whole."¹⁷¹

As you develop your own outline new questions may arise. This is part of the discovery process and in this process your outline will become a valuable tool. Michaels adds, "Your own outline should become the one most useful to you, precisely because it is yours. It makes the book of Revelation your own, and it will be your framework for approaching specific texts—provided, of course, you are willing to revise it in light of what you discover."¹⁷² Included below is my own outline of Revelation.

Outline of the Book of Revelation

- I. The Prologue to the Book of Revelation. 1:1-8
 - A. Origins of Revelation and the Blessing for its Audience. 1:1-3

¹⁷⁰ Calkins, *Master Preachers*, 58.

¹⁷¹ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed., (Louisville, KY: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2002), 30.

¹⁷² J. Ramsey Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 51.

- B. Greetings to the Seven Churches. 1:4-6
- C. The Assurance of Christ's Second Advent and Doxology. 1:7-8

II. Christ's Messages to the Seven Churches. 1:9-3:22

- A. The Reason for the Address to the Seven Churches. 1: 9-11
- B. A Description of John's Vision of Christ on Patmos. 1:12-16
- C. Christ Explains the Vision. 1:17-20
- D. The Message to Ephesus Calls Them to Return to their First Love. 2:1-7
- E. The Message to Smyrna Calls them to be Faithful during Persecution. 2:8-11
- F. The Message to Pergamum Calls Them to Repent for Compromising their Teaching. 2:12-17
- G. The Message to Thyatira Calls Them to Repent for Tolerating the False Prophetess in their Midst. 2:18-29
- H. The Message to Sardis Calls Them to Remain Faithful and Hold Fast to What They've Already Received. 3:1-6
- I. The Message to Philadelphia Promises to keep them from the Hour of Trial Because They've Persevered. 3:7-13
- J. The Message to Laodicea Counsels Them to Be Zealous. 3:14-22

III. A Vision of God on His Throne and of the Lamb. 4:1-5:14

- A. God's Throne is High, Mighty and Exalted. 4:1-6
- B. The Four Living Creatures and the 24 Elders Worship Before God on His Throne. 4:6-11
- C. Only the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is Found Worthy to Open the Scroll. 5:1-5
- D. The Lamb Takes the Scroll Out of the Right Hand of God. 5:6-7
- E. The Four Living Creatures, 24 Elders, Angels and Every Living Creature Worship God and the Lamb. 5:9-14

IV. The Lamb Opens the Seven Seals. 6:1-8:1

- A. The First Seal Reveals a Rider on a White Horse Who Goes Out Conquering. 6:1-2
- B. The Second Seal Reveals a Fiery Red Horse Whose Rider Takes Peace From the Earth. 6:3-4
- C. The Third Seal Reveals a Black Horse and Its Rider Holding a Pair of Scales. 6:5-6
- D. The Fourth Seal Reveals a Pale Horse and Its Rider was Death. 6:7-8
- E. The Fifth Seal Reveals Those Who had been slain for the Word of God and the Testimony they Held. 6:9-11
- F. The Sixth Seal Reveals an Earthquake and Signs in the Heavens and the Sky Receding Like a Scroll. 6:12-17
- G. The 144,000 are sealed in Preparation for the Winds of Strife that are About to Blow on the Earth. 7:1-8

- H. The Great Multitude Testify of God's Salvation and the Angels, Four Living Creatures & 24 Elders Respond by Worshiping God. 7:9-17
- I. When the Seventh Seal is opened there is Silence in Heaven. 8:1

- V. The Seven Trumpets are Sounded and a Mighty Angel Holds a Little Book, and the Two Witnesses are Given Power to Testify. 8:2-11:18
 - A. The Seven Angels are Given Seven Trumpets. 8:2
 - B. The Angel with the Golden Censer throws it to the Earth. 8:3-5
 - C. The Seven Angels are prepared to Blow the Seven Trumpets. 8:6
 - D. At the Sounding of the First Trumpet 1/3 of the Trees and Grass are Burned Up with Hail, Fire Mingled with Blood. 8:7
 - E. At the Sounding of the Second Trumpet 1/3 of the Living Creatures Die and 1/3 of the Ships are destroyed as a Great Mountain Burning with Fire is thrown into the Sea. 8:8-9
 - F. At the Sounding of the Third Trumpet a Great Star Named Wormwood Falls From Heaven. 8:10-11
 - G. At the Sounding of the Fourth Trumpet 1/3 of the Heavenly Bodies Were Darkened. 8:12
 - H. The Angel in Mid-heaven Announces the Three Woes 8:13
 - I. At the Sounding of the Fifth Trumpet an Angel Falls from Heaven and is Given a Key to the Bottomless Pit. 9:1-11
 - J. The Announcement is made that the First Woe is Past. 9:12
 - K. At the Sounding of the Sixth Trumpet Four Angels are released at the Euphrates to Kill 1/3 of Mankind. 9:13-21
 - L. A Mighty Angel with a Little Book in His Hand Swears that Time Should Be No Longer. 10:1-7
 - M. John is instructed to eat the Little Book in the Hand of the Mighty Angel. 10:8-11
 - N. The Temple of God is measured and the Two Witnesses are given Power to Prophecy for 1,260 Days. 11:1-3
 - O. The Two Witnesses are described as Standing before the Throne of God and having Power to devour their Enemies with Fire and to shut the Waters of Heaven and Turn Water to Blood. 11:4-6
 - P. The Two Witnesses are Killed for Giving their Testimony. 11:7-10
 - Q. The Two Witnesses are Resurrected and are Taken up to Heaven. 11:11-13
 - R. The Announcement is made that the Second Woe is Past. 11:14
 - S. The Seventh Trumpet Announces the Transfer of the Kingdoms of this World to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. 11:15
 - i. The 24 Elders respond to the Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet by Worshiping God. 11:16-18
 - ii. At the Announcement of the Judgment the Ark of the Covenant is Made Visible in God's Temple. 11:19

- VI. A Look at the Final Crisis on Earth between Good and Evil. 12:1-14:20
 - A. The Dragon attempts to destroy the Child of the Woman. 12:1-6

- B. Heaven is the Origin of the Great Controversy. 12:7-12
- C. The Dragon Pursues the Woman into the Wilderness. 12:13-17
- D. The First Beast Arises from the Sea to Lead the World into False Worship. 13:1-10
- E. The Second Beast Arises from the Land to Force the World to Worship the First Beast and His Image. 13:11-18
- F. The 144,000 Stand Victorious on Mount Zion. 14:1-5
- G. The Message of the Three Angels is given to the Inhabitants of Earth. 14:6-13
- H. The Final Harvest of the Righteous and the Wicked is completed on Planet Earth. 14:14-20

VII. A Look at the Victors over the Beast and the Seven Last Plagues on Planet Earth. 15:1-16:21

- A. The Seven Angels Appear having the Seven Last Plagues. 15:1
- B. A Song is sung by those who are Victorious over the Beast. 15:2-8
- C. The Command is given to pour out the Seven Last Plagues. 16:1
- D. The First Bowl poured out is a Plague of Sores on those who Worship the Beast. 16:2
- E. The Second Bowl poured out turns the Sea to Blood. 16:3
- F. The Third Bowl poured out turns the Rivers and Springs to Blood. 16:4-7
- G. The Fourth Bowl poured out causes the Sun to scorch men with fire. 16:8-9
- H. The Fifth Bowl poured out on the Throne of the Beast and his Kingdom causing it to be full of darkness. 16:10-11
- I. The Sixth Bowl poured out dries up the Great River Euphrates in preparation for the Battle of Armageddon. 16:12-16
- J. After the Seventh Bowl is poured out there is a Great Earthquake and a Plague of Hail. 16:17-21

VIII. The Judgment of the Great Whore & the Fall of Babylon. 17:1-18:24

- A. A Woman dressed in Purple and Scarlet is seen sitting on a Scarlet Beast. 17:1-6
- B. The meaning of the Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast is explained. 17:7-18
- C. The announcement is made that Babylon is fallen. 18:1-3
- D. The announcement is made to "Come out of Babylon. 18:4-8
- E. The Kings and Merchants of the Earth weep over the fall of Babylon. 18:9-19
- F. Heaven calls for rejoicing over the destruction of Babylon. 18:21-24.

IX. Heaven rejoices at the destruction of Babylon at Christ's Second Coming and then the Millennium begins. 19:1-20:15

- A. Heaven rejoices over the fall of Babylon. 19:1-3
- B. The Four Living Creatures and the 24 Elders Worship God for His Judgment of Babylon. 19:4-8

- C. The Beatitude for the Guests of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
19:9-10
- D. Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. 19:11-16
- E. The Beast is defeated along with his Allies. 19:17-21
- F. Satan is bound for 1,000 years. 20:1-3
- G. The Saints get to participate in the Millennial Judgment. 20:4-6
- H. Satan's Final Rebellion is directed against God's Holy City. 20:7-10
- I. The Final Judgment is carried out against Satan and all who followed his rebellion. 20:11-15

X. After the New Heaven and the New Earth are established the New Jerusalem descends from Heaven. 21:1-22:5

- A. A New Heaven and a New Earth are restored and the New Jerusalem descends from Heaven. 21:1-8
- B. A description of the New Jerusalem is given. 21:9-21
- C. A description is given of the Glory of the Temple of the New Jerusalem. 21:22-27
- D. A description is given of the River of Life. 22:1-5

XI. The Epilogue to the Book of Revelation. 22:6-21

- A. The Assurance of the truth of God's Revelation and the Promise of Christ's Second Coming. 22:6-11
- B. Jesus warns the Church of His Soon Coming and invites everyone to accept the salvation He offers. 22:12-17
- C. The Final Warning is given to those who hear the words of this prophecy. 22:18-19
- D. The Final assurance of Christ's Second Coming. 22:20
- E. The Benediction. 22:21

Understanding Revelation's Context

To this point commentaries have been ignored to allow the preacher to think freely without receiving any biased input from these sources. But if the preceding steps have been followed carefully they will have provided a wealth of insight. Now you can consult outside resources to test and add to your understanding of the book.

Commentaries and other resources on Revelation can be helpful because they supply important background information necessary to understanding the times and circumstances when Revelation was written. I want to strongly encourage every

preacher to do their own research. However, a brief review of this background information will help see the approach to this particular project.

The first point to be established is the book's authorship. While Revelation identifies John as the author no other background information is given. Because of this lack of text-based information regarding John's credentials, his apostolic authority has been questioned. Adding to the force of the question is the difference in the Greek of John's gospel when compared to Revelation. Because the style of Greek used in Revelation is so different from the Gospel of John a case is made for two different authors.

In spite of this question, it can be argued that John of Revelation also wrote the Gospel. This conclusion is based on the record of the early church fathers who acknowledged John of Revelation as one of the twelve.¹⁷³ One explanation for the stylistic differences is that Greek was not John's native language because John was a Hebraic Jew by birth. Therefore he may have had editorial assistance when he wrote the gospel as opposed to when he wrote Revelation on the isle of Patmos.

Another factor important to understanding Revelation's background is the date of its composition. There are two schools of thought on this point. One view holds an early date for Revelation's composition, around A.D. 65, during the time of Emperor Nero. The second view held by the majority of scholars is that Revelation was written much later, around A.D. 95, during the time of Emperor Domitian. Bible scholars propose these dates because Christians experienced some form of persecution during both periods. Because Revelation speaks of martyrdom these

¹⁷³ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 2.

pieces were in place for persecution to occur because the legal requirements to participate in emperor worship were established by Emperor Trajan in 113 A.D.¹⁷⁸

Non-biblical evidence also points to a later date. A Christian named Ireneaus wrote in the Second Century A.D. that John's visions were "seen not long ago, but almost in our own time, at the end of the reign of Domitian."¹⁷⁹ When considering the reign of Domitian, A.D. 81-96 and the legal requirements for emperor worship in place by the second decade of the Second Century A.D. the later date seems more plausible.

Commentaries and other resources can be helpful in sorting through the different approaches to interpreting Revelation. The four most common schools of interpretation are preterist, historicist, futurist, or idealist. However, when one viewpoint is favored to the exclusion of all others the tendency for the preacher is to force the text into one of these paradigms. Paulien counsels, "As we go through the book of Revelation, we will want to be sensitive to the evidence of the text."¹⁸⁰ This counsel reminds us once again of the importance of the task of expository preaching—discovering what the text says rather than imposing on it what we want it to say.

Finally, there is the importance of understanding the literary genre of the book.¹⁸¹ Scholars remain challenged as to how the entire book should be classified. J. Ramsey Michaels recognizes the difficulty of classifying the book:

¹⁷⁸ Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 43.

¹⁸⁰ Paulien, 30.

¹⁸¹ Fee, 29.

Many literary theorists have suggested that good, and especially great, works never quite belong to a single genre. They are highly individual creations that expand the categories to the breaking point. This is certainly true of the Book of Revelation. If a letter, it is like no other early Christian letter we possess. If an apocalypse, it is like no other apocalypse. If a prophecy, it is unique among prophecies.¹⁸²

Therefore consult several commentaries to understand the basis of the arguments.

Because when you select your text you need to know what genre you are working with.

Although this survey is not exhaustive it highlights how important background information is when doing expository preaching in Revelation. Once the passages are selected use the commentaries to help answer your questions and check your observations made during your extensive reading.

Selecting Your Passages

Now the passages are ready to be selected. One criterion that requires more detailed explanation is the term expository sermon. Haddon Robinson's definition of expository preaching gives valuable guidance:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.¹⁸³

Based on Robinson's definition the goal for these sermons is to communicate the biblical concept derived from the passages selected. Therefore, I need to find the

¹⁸² Michaels, *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*, 31, 32.

¹⁸³ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 3rd ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 21.

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Based on Robinson's definition the goal for these sermons is to communicate the biblical concept derived from the passages selected. Therefore, I need to find the passages that speak of Christ-centered worship. I also need to discover the concept or idea the biblical writer was trying to express about worship.

So what does an idea look like on paper? Robinson says, "Words are stupid things until linked with other words to convey meaning."¹⁸⁴ So a word

¹⁸³ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 21.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 23.

standing alone doesn't communicate an idea. But when they are organized into sentences with nouns, verbs and other parts of speech they begin to speak with a dimension of thought that communicates meaning. Sentences are then grouped together because they are linked by the common thread of the writer's idea into a paragraph, "because paragraphs delineate the building blocks of thought."¹⁸⁵ Walter C. Kaiser affirms this stating, "The principal feature of a paragraph is a unifying theme. This is often indicated by the repeated use of the same term or concepts ("love" in I Cor. 13; "wisdom" in I Cor. 2:6ff)."¹⁸⁶ Therefore, when the preacher looks for the theme of worship in Revelation it will be discovered at the paragraph level.

But consider this caution first. Most Bible translations already contain paragraph markings. This is the work of editors who have already attempted to identify the flow of thought.¹⁸⁷ While this may initially appear as an advantage to you it means no two English translations may identify the paragraph exactly the same. As Robinson points out, "Even Hebrew and Greek texts reflect editorial variations in the paragraph divisions."¹⁸⁸ A careful examination of both a variety of English translations as well as the original texts is necessary in order to discover where the thoughts of the writer begin and end based on the grammatical structure of the text.

Here is where Kaiser gives valuable advice concerning this matter:

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 54-55.

¹⁸⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1981), 96.

¹⁸⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 55.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

1. The principal feature of a paragraph is a unifying theme. This is often indicated by the repeated use of the same term or concepts (“love” in 1 Cor. 13; “wisdom” in 1 Cor. 2:6ff.).
2. Rhetorical questions will often introduce a new paragraph (cf. Rom. 6:1).
3. A vocative form of address may commence a new paragraph e.g., Col. 3:18—4:1).
4. Sudden changes in the text are one of the best ways to detect the beginning of a paragraph. For example, there may be an abrupt shift in the key actor or participant; the mood, tense, or voice of the verb; the location of the action; or the topic. The use of a striking introductory connective, be it a conjunction, preposition, or a relative pronoun, can also be an indicator.
5. Frequently what appears at or near the end of one paragraph is taken up and developed more fully in the next paragraph (e.g. “wisdom” in 1 Cor. 2:5 and 6ff.)¹⁸⁹

These principles suggested by Kaiser give the preacher the means to discover the main idea of the preaching text in the basic literary unit—the paragraph.¹⁹⁰ What follows are the specific texts selected based on Robinson’s definition of an expository sermon and Kaiser’s rules for identifying paragraphs in the biblical text.

The first passage selected for this series is Revelation 7:9-17. In Revelation 7:1, 9 John makes the statement, “After these things.” The first statement introduces the 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8, while the second section introduces a great multitude which is beyond numbering. To go beyond Revelation 7:17 introduces the seventh seal, another literary unit. Revelation 7:9-17 is a worship passage because it describes the unnumbered multitude giving praise both to God and the Lamb for providing salvation. Verse 11 describes the angels, 24 elders, and the four living creatures act of worship. Based on this evidence described Revelation 7:9-17 is clearly a worship passage.

¹⁸⁹ Kaiser, *Towards an Exegetical Theology*, 96.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

The second passage selected for the series, Revelation 11:15-19, is identified as a literary unit on the following basis. Revelation 11:15-19 describes the blowing of the seventh trumpet and the response to this announcement. In Revelation 11:1-13 the primary focus is not the trumpets but the two witnesses, with a brief interlude in verse 14 declaring the coming of the third woe. Therefore, the beginning of Revelation 11:15 initiates a whole new thought. The passage starts with “Then the seventh angel sounded:” similar to how the previous six trumpet passages started when they began a separate thought. The beginning of this unit in verse 15 declares the reign of the Lord and his Christ. This announcement is followed in verse 16 with the 24 elders responding by worshipping God. Revelation 11:18 concludes this thought as a hymn sung by the elders who have worshiped God and have ascribed praise to Him for His judgments. Although verse 19 may initially appear to introduce a separate thought based on John’s description of the ark of God’s covenant in the heavenly temple it serves as the backdrop for the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The sounding of the trumpet and the vision of the ark are echoes of the Old Testament feast days described in Leviticus 23:23-32. The Feast of Trumpets was a prelude to the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement was an annual judgment held in the nation of Israel. Revelation 11:15-19 is clearly a worship passage based on the content of those verses.

The third passage selected is Revelation 13:1-10. I have identified Revelation 13:1-10 as a complete literary unit for the following reasons. The dramatic introduction John uses in Revelation 13:1 clearly introduces a new idea distinct from the historical sequence of Revelation 12. Revelation 13:10 is the last verse of the unit

because it serves both as a warning to those who persecute and an appeal for endurance for those who must undergo the persecution described in Revelation 13:1-10. To go beyond verse 10 would introduce the land beast and its activities as a separate idea. The content of Revelation 13:1-10 is about a global conflict over worship. The primary aspect of this conflict is over who is really worthy of worship; God or Satan? For these reasons Revelation 13:1-10 is a complete literary unit for preaching the subject of worship.

The fourth passage selected is Revelation 14:6-7. Although this passage is part of a larger literary unit, Revelation 14:6-13, this smaller unit can be preached separately since it is one of three distinct messages within the larger context of verses 6-13. (Remember, the purpose of this project is to not select every passage on worship but to select a few to serve as models.) Revelation 14:6-7 is unique from the other passages in that the previous three demonstrate worship taking place in response to God's actions, and Revelation 14:6-7 is an invitation for the entire world to worship the Creator.

The final passage selected is Revelation 15:2-4. Revelation 15:1 serves as a transition passage to break from the theme of chapter 14 and introduce what will transpire in chapters 15 and 16. John's statement, "And I saw" in Revelation 15:2 marks the beginning of the selected passage as a separate literary unit. Although Revelation 15:2-8 can be seen as one unit for the purpose of preaching I have chosen to separate it into two units. My reason is that Revelation 15:2-4 describes the song of victory of those over the beast while Revelation 15:5-8 depicts the implementation

of the bowl judgments. In addition, John implies a second thought when he writes, “After these things I looked,” in Revelation 15:5.

The five passages have been selected for the purpose of developing a motif of Christ-centered worship for expository preaching in the book of Revelation beyond chapter three. Each passage has been identified as a separate literary unit in order to expose the biblical concept John intended to communicate to his original audience. Although other passages throughout Revelation 4-22 describe worship, the passages selected are sufficient to demonstrate how this motif can be developed.

Comparing Translations

Now that the passages have been selected it is time to focus on extensive reading within the text itself. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to read the passages you selected in various translations. Pay attention to where the translations disagree because that allows you to see what point of view the translator holds on that particular passage.¹⁹¹ Consult with commentaries and other resources to get valuable light on why a translator made their choice. Continue to write down all your observations and questions about what you’re reading. I have selected the following two passages to demonstrate the problems typically found when comparing translations.

The first passage selected for comparison is Revelation 7:15, “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.” The four translations used for this

¹⁹¹ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 60.

project, NKJV, NASB, RSV, and NIV, translate the word *λατρεύονσιν* as “serve,” whereas the NRSV translates it as *worship*. This is a legitimate translation. The root meaning is “to render religious service and homage, worship.”¹⁹² The translators of the NRSV are trying to capture the essence of John’s message regarding the how the unnumbered multitude will spend eternity—by worshipping God through acts of grateful service.

The second passage is Revelation 15:3 NASB, which reads, “Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!” The word translated nations is *ἐθνῶν*. But in the NKJV the word is translated as *saints* and in the RSV and NIV the word is translated *ages*. In each of these three translations a footnote is given explaining the difference and attributing it to various ancient manuscripts cited for that particular translation. While this may not pose a problem for the experienced Christian, a new believer might become confused. Your congregation simply needs to understand that in spite of this variation the overall meaning of the verse is not changed.

This brief survey demonstrates what is necessary for the preacher to gaining a broad and deep understanding of the texts selected. This step is particularly helpful if your congregation favors a particular translation. By researching the details you are better equipped to address their concerns.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 248.

¹⁹³ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* 3rd ed., 137.

Translating the Texts

While there are many fine Bible versions available there is no better substitute for writing your own translation. Ekkehardt Müller strongly advocates this position, “The person who is able to read the biblical languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—should translate the passage under investigation and put it down in writing.”¹⁹⁴ While this may seem tedious and time consuming, please note Paulien’s counsel, “The best safeguard against self-deception is an exegesis based on the original languages.”¹⁹⁵ By doing so we avoid eisegesis, or reading into the text, and imposing our pre-conceived ideas onto the text, instead of discovering what the text actually is trying to say. Once you begin translating you will quickly recognize there is much to be gained from this step. Regarding the benefits of doing your own translation Fee writes, “it will help you notice things about the passage that you would not notice in reading, even in the original.”¹⁹⁶ The following are my translations of the selected texts.¹⁹⁷

Revelation 7:9-17

9 Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἴδοὺ ὄχλος πολύς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο, ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν ἑστᾶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκὰς καὶ φοίνικες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν, 10 καὶ κράζουσιν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες·

¹⁹⁴ Ekkehardt Müller, “Guidelines for the Interpretation of Scripture,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 115.

¹⁹⁵ Jon Paulien, *The Deep Things of God: An Insider’s Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 80.

¹⁹⁶ Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 137.

¹⁹⁷ Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1993).

ἡ σωτηρία τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ
θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ.

11 Καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι εἰστήκεισαν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν
πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ
θρόνου ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ **12**
λέγοντες·

ἀμήν, ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ
ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἵσχυς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς
αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

13 Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγων μοι· οὗτοι οἱ
περιβεβλημένοι τὰς στολὰς τὰς λευκὰς τίνες εἰσὶν καὶ πόθεν
ἥλθον; **14** καὶ εἰρηκα αὐτῷ· κύριέ μου, σὺ οἶδας. καὶ εἶπέν μοι·
οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης
καὶ ἐπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν
καὶ ἐλεύκαναν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἀρνίου.

15 διὰ τοῦτο εἰσιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ
καὶ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ
αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου σκηνώσει ἐπ' αὐτούς.
16 οὐ πεινάσουσιν ἔτι οὐδὲ διψήσουσιν ἔτι
οὐδὲ μὴ πέσῃ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὁ ἥλιος οὐδὲ πᾶν καῦμα,
17 ὅτι τὸ ἀρνίον τὸ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ θρόνου ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς
καὶ ὁδηγήσει αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγὰς ὑδάτων,
καὶ ἔξαλείψει ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

9 After these things I looked and behold a great multitude which no one could number from all nations and tribes and people and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes and palm branches in the hands of them.

10 and crying out with a loud voice saying salvation to our God and to the one sitting upon the throne and to the Lamb.

11 And all the angels they stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures and they fell before the throne upon their faces and worshiped God,

12 saying amen blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might of our God into the eternity of the eternities amen.

13 and one of the elders responded saying to me these clothed in the white robes, who are they and whence have they come?

14 and I said to him, my lord you know and he said to me, these are they who came out from the great affliction and have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in his temple and He who sits upon the throne will dwell among them.

16 neither shall they hunger still, nor thirst still, neither shall the sun strike them, neither any heat.

17 Because the Lamb among the midst of them will shepherd them and guide them to living springs of water and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Revelation 11:15-19

15 Καὶ ὁ ἔβδομος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισεν· καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγοντες·

ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
καὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ,
καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

16 Καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι [οἱ] ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους αὐτῶν ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ **17** λέγοντες·

εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ,
ὁ ὄν καὶ ὁ ᾓν,
ὅτι εἰληφας τὴν δύναμίν σου τὴν μεγάλην
καὶ ἐβασίλευσας.

18 καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὀργίσθησαν,
καὶ ἥλθεν ἡ ὀργὴ σου
καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν κριθῆναι
καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου τοῖς προφήταις
καὶ τοῖς ἀγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου,
τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους,
καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν.

19 Καὶ ἤνοιγη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ὥφθη ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένοντο ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμὸς καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη.

15 And the seventh angel sounded a trumpet and there were loud voices in the heaven saying the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign into the eternity of the eternities.

16 and the twenty-four elders sitting upon their thrones before God fell upon their faces and worshiped their God

17 saying, we give thanks to you Lord God the Almighty the One who is and who was because You have taken Your great power and You have begun to reign.

18 and the nations were angry and Your wrath has come and the time of the dead should be judged and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the

saints and those who fear your name the small and the mighty and should destroy those who destroy the earth.

19 and the temple of God was opened in the heaven and the ark of His covenant was seen in the temple, and there was lightening and noises and thunder and earthquake and great hail.

Revelation 13:1-10

1 Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς Θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὄνόμα[τα] βλασφημίας. **2** καὶ τὸ θηρίον ὃ εἶδον ἦν ὅμοιον παρδάλει καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔξουσίαν μεγάλην. **3** καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη.

Καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὅπισω τοῦ θηρίου **4** καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἔξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ; **5** Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἔξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσεράκοντα [καὶ] δύο. **6** καὶ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίας πρὸς τὸν θεόν βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ, τοὺς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας. **7** καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν ἀγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἔξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος. **8** καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

9 Εἴ τις ἔχει οὓς ἀκουσάτω.

10 εἴ τις εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει· εἴ τις ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀποκτανθῆναι.
Ωδέ ἐστιν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἀγίων.

1 And I saw a beast rising up from the sea having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his heads ten crowns and upon his heads blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and his great authority.

3 And one of the heads was as wounded to death, and the blow of death was healed. And the whole world marveled after the beast.

4 And they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast and they worshiped the beast saying, “Who is like the beast?” and “Who is able to make war with him?”

5 And he was given a mouth speaking great blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue 42 months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy to God blaspheming His name, and His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

7 And he was given to make war with the saints and overcome them, and he was given authority upon all tribes, and people, and tongues, and nations.

8 And they will worship him, all who dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life, slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear let him hear.

10 He who takes one into captivity, into captivity he will go; he who kills with the sword, must be killed by the sword.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Revelation 14:6-7

6 Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσουρανήματι, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον εὐαγγελίσαι ἐπὶ τοὺς καθημένους ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ φυλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ λαόν, **7** λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ·

φοβήθητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἡλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

6 And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to those dwelling upon the earth and upon every nation and tribe and tongue and people,

7 saying in a loud voice fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come and worship who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and fountains of water.

Revelation 15:2-4

2 Καὶ εἶδον ὡς θάλασσαν ὑαλίνην μεμιγμένην πυρὶ καὶ τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν ὑαλίνην ἔχοντας κιθάρας τοῦ θεοῦ. **3** καὶ ἄδονσιν τὴν ωδὴν Μωϋσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ωδὴν τοῦ ἀρνίου λέγοντες·

In Revelation 13:1 the beast is described as wearing crowns on its heads. The word John uses for crowns comes the word *diadema*. This is the type of crown worn by a king. Where the translation exercise proves beneficial is in comparing the crowns worn by the beast with that worn by the woman in Revelation 12:1. In Revelation 12:1 the woman wears a *stephanos* which can also be translated as a garland or wreath—representing victory.¹⁹⁸ This exercise is helpful because some English translations do not make this distinction.¹⁹⁹ This clarifies for the reader the victory achieved by God’s people is through faith in Jesus Christ whereas the beast attempts to rule by using the power of the state to intimidate.²⁰⁰

The purpose of the exercise is to help the preacher get further into the word than an English translation allows. The observations made are not exhaustive but show what can be seen by doing your own translation. If necessary consult a commentary to compare with your discoveries.

Doing a Structural Analysis

Discovering the subject of a passage requires the preacher to examine the text from as many angles as possible. Doing a structural analysis²⁰¹ provides that

¹⁹⁸ The *stephanos* was a wreath worn on the head of athletes after achieving victory in an athletic contest.

¹⁹⁹ For example the KJV and the NIV use the word “crown” in Revelation 12:1 and 13:1.

²⁰⁰ Revelation 14:8; 17:2.

²⁰¹ There are a variety of terms that described the same method. “Structural diagram” is used by Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Pub., 1994), 27-35; “Syntactical analysis” by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Toward and Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 89-104; “Structural analysis” by Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed., (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 41-58; “Mechanical layout” by

opportunity that a translation comparison or your own translation does not. The structural analysis allows the reader to see both the main points of the passage as well as the supporting material in their own proper perspective. By doing the analysis you are better equipped to identify the subject.

Here the steps I follow when doing a structural analysis. First, make a copy of your passage using one translation. Select a particular highlighter marker and identify all of the connectives²⁰² within the passage on that copy. This step can be very helpful for those inexperienced at this because the highlighting process allows the preacher to slow down and pay attention to the passage in a way they may not do so ordinarily. The connectives are parts of speech the writer used to connect one thought with another within passage.²⁰³ Connectives that show a sequence are, “and,” “also.” Connectives that show a reason are, “therefore,” or “because.” Next write out the structural layout of the passage. It would be most helpful to use pencil rather than pen to correct any mistakes. For those who prefer to use word processing software, using a smaller font and a horizontal landscape orientation of the page will allow you to get more text on the page. For those who are new to this and are looking for a step by step explanation see McDill’s book.²⁰⁴ The structural analysis of the passages for this project can be located in Appendix B.

Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 68.

²⁰² For a helpful list of connectives see Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Pub., 1994), 30-32; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981), 97. Kaiser identifies these parts of speech as conjunctions.

²⁰³ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 30.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 33-35.

Looking for the Idea

Step nine is a demonstration of how to identify the biblical concept from the selected passages. While every step in this journey is important, if you do not identify the biblical concept you have nothing to say in the pulpit. To help identify the biblical concept break the idea down into two parts: a subject and a complement.²⁰⁵ An idea must have both in order to be complete. In the case of expository preaching, the subject of the sermon is based on what the biblical writer is talking about in that particular passage. Robinson describes it as the “complete, definite answer to the question, ‘What am I talking about?’”²⁰⁶ The complement is the second half of the idea because it completes it by answering the question, “What am I saying about what I am talking about?”²⁰⁷ Only when the subject and complement are joined together can the idea be complete. If you ask these two questions of the passages the biblical concept will start to emerge.

But even when asking these questions to find the subject and complement your answers might not always be immediately clear. Sometimes the answer may be too broad. To help narrow it down ask the following six questions as they relate to the passages selected: how, what, why, when, where, and who. When these six questions are asked of the passage they can be one of the most helpful steps that clarify what the subject is.

²⁰⁵ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 41.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

identify the biblical concept you have nothing to say in the pulpit. To help identify the biblical concept break the idea down into two parts: a subject and a complement.²⁰⁵ An idea must have both in order to be complete. In the case of expository preaching, the subject of the sermon is based on what the biblical writer is talking about in that particular passage. Robinson describes it as the “complete, definite answer to the question, ‘What am I talking about?’”²⁰⁶ The complement is the second half of the idea because it completes it by answering the question, “What am I saying about what I am talking about?”²⁰⁷ Only when the subject and complement are joined together can the idea be complete. If you ask these two questions of the passages the biblical concept will start to emerge.

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Once the subject and complement are identified put them together in the clearest statement possible. When you have done this you will have identified your biblical concept. When you have your biblical concept clarified you now have

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 41

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

something to take in the pulpit. I have applied this step to the selected passages below.

Revelation 7:9-17

To find the subject of Revelation 7:9-17, ask, what is John talking about in this passage? The answer: the great multitude. But this is too broad because it says nothing about what they are doing, or why they are standing before the throne of God. What else does the text say about the great multitude that would be more specific? In Revelation 7:9 John describes the great multitude as being so numerous no one could number them because it is made up of people from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. But the subject must take into account the entire passage not just verse nine. Revelation 7:10 describes the great multitude giving a testimony that inspires all heaven to worship God. Beale confirms this point. “The angels surrounding the throne area also extol God in conjunction with the praises offered in v 10. They glorify God for redeeming, protecting, and granting victory to the multitude.”²⁰⁸ Therefore, the subject is: “Who is this great multitude that inspires all of heaven to worship God?”

Phrasing the subject in the form of a question helps us find the complement. So what is John saying about this great multitude that inspires worship in heaven? He says they are dressed in white robes and wave palm branches. The white robe is worn by those who overcome (Revelation 3:5). White robes also represent righteousness (Revelation 19:8). The palm branches are a symbol of rejoicing and victory (Leviticus 23:40; John 12:13). One of the elders provides further identification of the

²⁰⁸ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 432.

great multitude by saying they have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes in the blood of the lamb (Revelation 7:13-14). The qualities John attributes to the great multitude can be summarized as both victorious and righteous. They are victorious because they have come through the great tribulation. They are righteous because the blood of the Lamb has purified them. It is these qualities that allow them to stand before the throne and give their testimony. It is this testimony that inspires heaven to worship.

In review the subject is: "Who is this great multitude that inspires heaven to worship God?" The complement is: They are those whose victory and righteousness comes from God and the Lamb. When we combine the subject with the complement it reads: "The great multitude that inspires heaven to worship God are those whose victory and righteousness comes from God and the Lamb." To make this statement relevant to your congregation you can say: "Those who inspire heaven to worship are those who know their salvation comes from God."

Revelation 11:15-18

To identify the subject we need to ask the question: "What is John talking about?" John is describing the arrival of the judgment. The arrival of the judgment is announced by the sounding of the trumpet. The trumpet has been used throughout biblical history to give warning, (Exodus 19:13); to gather for war, (Joshua 6:3, 4); as a call for worship, (Psalm 150:3). The trumpet was also sounded during the Feast of Trumpets to announce the approaching Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:23-32). The Day of Atonement in the OT was the antitypical Day of Judgment. Just as a lamb

offered in sacrifice in the OT symbolized the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in type (John 1:29, 36),²⁰⁹ so the Day of Atonement symbolized the Day of Judgment in type. Jon Paulien addresses this topic:

The blowing of seven trumpets—near the center of the book (Rev. 8-9, 11)—reminds the reader of the seven monthly new moon feasts that climaxed in the Feast of Trumpets, marking the transition between the spring and fall feasts. The Feast of Trumpets itself, falling on the first day of the seventh month (corresponding to the seventh trumpet) ushered in the time of judgment that led up to the Day Atonement (cf. 11:18-19). There is an increasing focus on the concept of judgment from that point on in the book.²¹⁰

This topic of judgment is developed further when the 24 elders respond to the sounding of the seventh trumpet by giving thanks and saying:

17 We give You thanks O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. **18** The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth.²¹¹

The response of the elders helps clarify the reason for the trumpet sounding—it is time for the dead to be judged. The elders also acknowledge a system of reward and punishment involved in the judgment.

Finally, verse 19 also supports the idea of the judgment. Revelation 11:19 is one of many scenes throughout the book referring to the OT sanctuary service.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Other New Testament writers also recognize this correlation: Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 7:27; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6, 12.

²¹⁰ Jon Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets: Some Current Discussions”, *Symposium on Revelation – Book 1*, Frank B. Holbrook, ed., Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 191.

²¹¹ Revelation 11:17, 18.

²¹² Revelation 1:12-20; 4:1-5:14; 8:2-6; 11:19; 15:5-8; 19:1-10; 21:1-22:5.

The description in this verse clearly reveals the contents of the Second Apartment of the sanctuary.²¹³ The Second Apartment was only seen by the priests once a year on the Day of Atonement.²¹⁴ Paulien writes, “(11:19) portrays an explicit view of the Second Apartment in the context of judgment (cf. 11:18).”²¹⁵

While the passage clearly describes an announcement of judgment, that subject is still too broad because it gives no information about the judgment. However, a closer look of the passage shows the elders responding to this news by worshiping God with thanksgiving. The response of thanksgiving from the elders makes the subject more specific. To help discover the complement we can now phrase the subject in the form of a question: “Why are the elders thankful for the judgment?”

In answering this question we discover the following. The elders express thanks to God for the announcement made at the sounding of the seventh trumpet “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Revelation 11:15). This announcement brings with it the promise that God’s kingdom has begun to reign with greater power than previously experienced.

Because the kingdom of God has begun in a fuller sense the elders also express the hope of justice. Justice is promised via the judgment which includes both rewards for the faithful and the destruction of the wicked. The rewards given for

²¹³ Exodus 40:20-22; 1 Kings 8:6.

²¹⁴ Leviticus 16:2, 12-17.

²¹⁵ Paulien, “Seals and Trumpets: Some Current Discussions”, 188.

God's people, the saints and those who fear His name are found in the closing chapters of Revelation 21 and 22, whereas the destruction of the wicked are described in Revelation 20.

The statement of the subject in the form of a question reads: "Why are the elders thankful to God for the judgment?" The answer to this question would be: Because He will reign with great power and justice. The biblical concept of the passage would say: "We can be thankful for the judgment because God will reign with great power and justice."

Revelation 13:1-10

What is the subject of Revelation 13:1-10? An immediate response might be: "The beast." But this is too broad of a statement because it gives no description of its activities. It is also inaccurate because the beast is only a by-product of Satan's last-day strategy to oppress the woman's offspring. To understand what Revelation 13:1-10 is talking about we need to begin by looking at Revelation 12.

The content of chapter 12 gives ample evidence of a tremendous conflict in heaven and on earth. This conflict unfolds in a historical sequence²¹⁶ involving both the dragon, God, and the church. In Revelation 12:17, the text describes the dragon's frustration over his inability to destroy the people of God symbolized by the woman. Because of his failures the dragon now seeks to wage war on the woman's offspring. In Revelation 13:1 the scene changes and John sees a beast rising out of the sea. The

²¹⁶ Jon Paulien, titled: *The End of Historicism? Reflections on the Adventist Approach to Biblical Apocalyptic – Part Two*, Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, Vol. 17, no. 1, (spring, 2006): 18-28.

beast is one of the instruments used by the dragon to wage this war.²¹⁷ So a more accurate subject stated in the form of a question would be: “What is the dragon’s last-day strategy for destroying God’s people?” We will now attempt to answer this question by looking at the passage.

The language John uses to describe this beast clearly demonstrates it is symbolic. Not only does it have multiple heads and horns but it wears crowns. The word John uses to describe the crowns of the beast is different from that worn by the woman in Revelation 12:1. The woman in Revelation 12:1 wears a *stephanos*, or a crown of victory; whereas the beast wears a *diadem*, a crown used to signify political power. In Revelation 17:12 John explains that the horns are kings. John’s description of the beast in Revelation 13:1, 2 recalls Daniel 7 where Daniel also used beasts to represent political kingdoms.²¹⁸ Based on John’s description and other biblical references, John is describing a global kingdom²¹⁹ that has political power.

In addition to political power this beast also wields religious power and influence. In Revelation 13:1 the beast is described as having a blasphemous name on its heads. The word blasphemy occurs four times within the passage, placing great emphasis upon this ability to lay claim to the prerogatives of God.²²⁰

The influence of the beast is great in its scope involving both time and geography. This influence over time is broken up into two time periods. The first

²¹⁷ Revelation 13:2, 4.

²¹⁸ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Revised, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), 246; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 680.

²¹⁹ Daniel 7:17.

²²⁰ Mark 2:7; John 8:57-59; 10:31-33.

lasts 42 months (Revelation 13:5). The second period of great influence of the beast, although not given in measurable time like the first period, is said to occur after the deadly wound is healed (Revelation 13:3). John emphasizes the beast's geographical influence with reference to ten kings (Revelation 13:1; 17:12); its ability to hold the world's attention (Revelation 13:3, 8); and its authority over every tribe, tongue and nation (Revelation 13:7).

The religious intent of the beast is clarified further by John's frequent use of the word "worship" or its derivative in the central part of the book. The word is used eight times in Revelation 13 and 14. Five of those occurrences appear in chapter 13, and three of them are found in verses 4 and 8. Based on the word occurrence it is clear this final conflict portrayed in chapter 13 and 14 is over worship.

But the worship given by the inhabitants of earth described in Rev 13:4 is attributed to Satan, not God. In Revelation 13:5, 6 the beast uses blasphemy to influence the world to worship. In Revelation 13:6 the beast uses force to compel the world to worship. By doing so he hopes to break the will of the saints so they will deny their faith in God through Jesus Christ.

So when considering the subject in the form of the question: "What is the dragon's last-day strategy for destroying God's people?" We can answer: "To compel the entire world into false worship." Putting the subject and complement together they read: "The dragon's last-day strategy for destroying God's people is to compel the entire world into false worship."

Revelation 14:6-7

eyes upon us.”²²¹ John’s appeal in Revelation 14:7 calls to mind a similar appeal made in Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. “*Fear God and keep His commandments*, for this is man’s all. *For God will bring every work into judgment* [emphasis mine] including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”²²² It must be remembered, the fear of God is not a blind experience, but an intelligent awakening to the presence of God in our lives by the power of the gospel as it is proclaimed in light of the heavenly judgment. This is the experience of conversion.

The second response is to “give glory to Him.” While the world wonders after the beast, heaven calls for men to give glory to God. Once the gospel awakens the individual’s conscience to the presence of God in their lives they are to respond by giving God glory. To give glory to God means to have respect or reverence for God. More specifically, it means to follow in God’s ways by keeping His commandments.²²³ John emphasizes this point just a few verses later in his appeal for the saints to endure and “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). John’s presentation in Revelation 14:6, 7 does not point to a works-based religion, but is a call to live a sanctified life in Jesus Christ.²²⁴

The third and final response is to “worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.”²²⁵ The purpose of this appeal is to call

²²¹ Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation: The Apocalypse through Hebrew Eyes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 124.

²²² The words italicized are to show the similarity between Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 and Revelation 14:6, 7. This is an example of John using an OT passage to reflect a NT truth in light of the gospel.

²²³ Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:2; 8:6; 17:19; Psalm 112:1; 119:63; Jeremiah 44:10; John 15:8-10.

²²⁴ John 15:1-10; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 5:2, 3.

²²⁵ Revelation 14:7.

Mankind to return to his Creator while standing out in contrast with the false worship attributed to the beast (Revelation 13:3, 4, 8). Beale states, “God is identified as the creator of all things as a motivation for people to worship him instead of the creation.”²²⁶ The theme of God as Creator runs throughout Scripture²²⁷ serving as a basis for the appeal to worship God. The seed of this idea can be found at the origin of human history in the book of Genesis. Doukhan writes: “The Bible opens with the story of Creation not only in virtue of its chronological precedence, but also as to situate the creature relative to its Creator. The Bible begins with Creation to provide a basis for worship.”²²⁸ It is no accident that the theme of worship and the argument for who is worthy of receiving it is found in the closing pages of the last book of the Bible. In light of John’s plea to give God glory, his appeal to worship the Creator recalls the final portion of the fourth commandment: “for in six days the Lord *made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and* [emphasis mine] all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”²²⁹ John’s appeal in Revelation 14:7 is significant because it points to the identity of the Creator—“the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.”²³⁰ Based on the context of Revelation 14 depending on who one chooses to

²²⁶ Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 753.

²²⁷ For example: Genesis 1, 2; Exodus 20:8-11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6-9; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Jonah 1:9; Acts 14:15; 17:24.

²²⁸ Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation*, 126.

²²⁹ Exodus 20:11, the emphasis is mine to show the similarity between Exodus 20:11 and Revelation 14:7.

²³⁰ This means of identifying who God is by connecting Him to His creation is not without precedent in the Scriptures. In Ezekiel 20:20 God told Israel the Sabbath was given as a sign between God and Israel that they would know that God is the Lord God. Jonah identified the one he worshiped as the Creator when he was on the ship going to Tarshish, and his identity was questioned by the sailors. In

worship—either God or Satan—has eternal consequences. Those who have their Father’s name written on their foreheads stand before the throne of God (Revelation 14:1, 5); while those who have the mark of the beast on their forehead or hand are destroyed (Revelation 14:9-11). Clearly, the preaching of the everlasting gospel is intended to call humans back to a faith-based relationship with their Creator who is in heaven.

The statement of the subject in the form of a question reads: “What is the purpose of proclaiming the everlasting gospel?” The answer to the question is: “To turn the inhabitants of the earth from a man-based religion to a heaven-bound faith.” When these are combined it reads: “The purpose of preaching the everlasting gospel is to turn the inhabitants of earth from a man-based religion to a heaven-bound faith.”

Revelation 15:2-4

What is the subject of Revelation 15:2-4? The answer is: “Who are those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and the number of his name.” While the subject is about those individuals who have this victory over the beast and its attributes, the focus of the passage is centered on their musical response to their victory. Therefore the answer needs to become simpler, yet remain text based.

his answer he said: “I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” Jonah 1:9. When the Church prayed for more boldness to preach the gospel they addressed God in Acts 4:24 as “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.” In Acts 14:15 when the apostle Paul appealed to the citizens of Lystra to turn from their idolatry to the “Living God” Paul identified the Living God as the one “who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.”

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What attribute can be ascribed to these people from the text to simplify it? These individuals are described as singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Just as Moses and the children of Israel were delivered from Pharaoh, so God delivered His people from the beast. This song is sung to God in commemoration of His great act of salvation (Revelation 15:3, 4). The subject can now be simplified as a question: “Who are those who sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb?”

The complement is found in what they sing. They sing of God’s works as being great and marvelous and His ways being just and true (Revelation 15:3). These

works and ways can only refer to His salvation provided by the Lamb (Revelation 13:8), and also the sustaining power of God that carries this people through a time of great trial and stress. Their song also recalls their response to the everlasting gospel calling them to fear God and give glory to Him and to worship God (Revelation 15:4). They trusted in the message of salvation by faith and now they stand victorious. Finally, their song recognizes the judgment of God being revealed (Revelation 15:4). This judgment is manifested by the bowls of plagues poured out on those who rejected God's salvation.

The subject is: "Who are those who sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb?" The complement reads: "Those who accepted God's salvation." When combined they read: "Those who sing a new song to God are those who've accepted His salvation."

Finding the Two Focuses of Scripture

From Genesis to Revelation the Scriptures reveal God's love for mankind. That message of love is manifested in two ways. First, God speaks through His word to show us our human condition because He wants to make us aware of our sin (2 Timothy 3:16). Second, God speaks through His word to reveal its Christ-centered focus because God loves us too much to let us remain in our sin (2 Timothy 3:15). Because these concepts are embedded in Scripture it becomes the duty of the preacher

to expose them to his congregation for their spiritual growth. This chapter will explain how to find these two focuses in the passages selected.

The human condition focus of the passage addresses the various issues human beings experience in this life. For example, as humans we are sinners by nature. So the Bible text may address our sinful condition,²³¹ or a specific sin like pride.²³² The text may also address the matter of how to carry out a specific ministry within the church like ministering to the sick.²³³ Bryan Chapell writes: “Just as greed, rebellion, lust, irresponsibility, poor stewardship, and pride are proper subjects of a sermon, so also are the desire to raise godly children, determining God’s will, and understanding one’s gifts.”²³⁴ The Scriptures address these issues because they are all part of our human condition and experience. Therefore, effective expository sermons will speak to the human condition.

To discover what human condition issue is addressed in a passage begin by observing the text while recognizing the truth of Scripture in your passage will have a direct correlation to a human condition issue it is intended to meet. McDill writes, “The need element is to biblical truth what hunger is to food, what a headache is to aspirin, what fatigue is to rest.”²³⁵ After the human condition issue is identified Chapell suggests asking the following question: “What do listeners share in common

²³¹ For example: Romans 1:18-32.

²³² For example: Daniel 4.

²³³ For example: James 5:13-18.

²³⁴ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 43.

²³⁵ McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 105.

with those to (or about) whom it was written or the one by whom it was written?”²³⁶

This question is designed to bring relevance to your sermon as you apply the human condition issue to your own congregation. Once the human condition issue is discovered then the Christ-centered focus can be applied.

The Christ-centered focus is revealed differently in each passage. Chapell identifies four categories. “Every text is predictive of the work of Christ, preparatory for the work of Christ, reflective of the work of Christ, and/or resultant of the work of Christ.”²³⁷ This is a useful template for examining a selected passage to discover the Christ-centered focus. Because Chapell’s model applies to all Scripture it can be applied on the passages selected for this project.

Under each heading for the selected passage I will list the biblical concept of the passage first for review purposes. Second, the human condition issue as it related to the time of Revelation’s composition. Third, the Christ-centered focus of the passage.

Revelation 7:9-17

The biblical idea of this passage is: “Those who inspire heaven to worship are those who know their salvation comes from God.”

The human condition this passage tries to address is: “The doubt we experience regarding God’s character of love and His ability to see His people through great trials.” Please note that the great multitude attributes their salvation to God (Revelation 7:10). The great multitude’s position before the throne of God is the

²³⁶ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 43.

²³⁷ Ibid., 275.

answer to the question asked by the lost if it was even possible to stand before God's throne (Revelation 6:16, 17). The robes made white by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14) answers any questions of doubt about whether God loves His creation. In addition, the redeemed are assured God will not only dwell with His people but will shepherd them and wipe away the tears from their eyes (Revelation 7:15-17).

The Christ-centered focus answer to the human condition issue is: "The plan of salvation made available through Jesus Christ." To get more specific using Chapell's template the Christ-centered focus would be the great multitude are present before the throne of God as a result of the work of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 11:15-19

The biblical idea of this passage is: "We can be thankful for the arrival of God's kingdom because He will reign with great power and justice."

The human condition this passage is trying to address is: "Living in rebellion toward God is futile." This passage speaks to this issue in several ways. First, at the sounding of the trumpet there are loud voices in heaven saying: "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Revelation 11:15). This statement reminds those living in rebellion towards God their time is running out. Second, the 24 elders who respond to this news by worshiping God say: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned." The elders recognize God's kingdom will be different from all

the kingdoms of the world. In God's kingdom there will be judgment and justice (Revelation 11:18).

The Christ-centered focus to this passage needs to be reflective of the work of Jesus Christ. Because there is a judgment those in the congregation who have yet to accept God's offer of salvation need to be told the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is still available and sufficient for them.

Revelation 13:1-10

The biblical idea of this passage is: "The dragon's last-day strategy for destroying God's people is to compel the entire world into false worship."

The human condition issue for this passage is: "Man's sinful condition leaves him vulnerable to false worship." This idea is found throughout the passage. Revelation 13:3 says the "And all the world marveled and followed the beast." Revelation 13:4 says, the world "worshiped the dragon...and they worshiped the beast." Revelation 13:8 says, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the beast]. These passages point out the tragedy of living a life apart from Jesus Christ ultimately leads to deception and ruin.

The Christ-centered focus of the passage needs to be reflective of the work of Christ. The passage and its surrounding context provide for this focus. In the passage Revelation 13:8 says the whole world will worship the beast with the exception of one people group—those who have had their names written in the Lamb's book of Life slain from the foundation of the world. It is imperative the truth of this verse be proclaimed to remind those who have not accepted Christ how

vulnerable they are to the current of false worship so prevalent in our world. In Revelation 13:4 the world asks the question: “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” Here, John uses parody to show the futility of following the beast because the dragon, who gives the beast his power and great authority, was already defeated in heaven by Michael²³⁸ (Revelation 12:7-9).

Revelation 14:6-7

The biblical idea of Revelation 14:6-7 is: “The purpose of preaching the everlasting gospel is to turn the inhabitants of earth from a man-based religion to a heaven-bound faith.”

The human condition issue is: “Without the gospel man is incapable of returning to his Creator.” The three angels’ message is heaven’s last warning to the inhabitants of earth. The proclamation of the everlasting gospel is the catalyst that can turn those who dwell on the earth from following the beast to worshiping God.

The Christ-centered focus of the passage will be reflective of the work of Jesus Christ. The Christ-centered focus will need to emphasize the claims of Jesus Christ in comparison to the claims of the beast in light of the everlasting gospel.

Revelation 15:2-4

The biblical idea of Revelation 15:2-4 is: “Those who sing a new song to God are those who’ve accepted His salvation.”

²³⁸ John is using a play on the name of Michael, which in Hebrew is translated: “Who is like God.” The great tragedy in this drama is that the world worships the dragon—a defeated foe of Christ while the world ignores Christ the only one who can give the world true victory over self.

The human condition issue this passage addresses is: “Man does not have the ability to overcome the beast, his image, his mark, the number of his name without God’s help.” Yet, Revelation 15:2 describes a people who will one day stand victorious on the sea of glass. In response to this victory they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The words of their song speak of the works of God because they understand having gone through the experience of the final crisis through Jesus Christ victory is possible.

The Christ-centered focus of the passage reflects on the work of Jesus Christ. The specific work of Jesus would be his all sufficiency experienced by God’s people during the final crisis described in Revelation 13 and 14. Because, God’s people respond by singing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb, the preacher can use the Exodus story as a backdrop for how God was able to provide for His people during that crisis experience so He will provide once again for His people.

Developing the Idea

Once the biblical writer’s idea is found it has to be developed. Developing an idea requires you to do one or more of the following: explain it; prove it; apply it.²³⁹ To develop the idea you have to go back to the passage and ask what the author was attempting to do. Was John trying to explain; prove; or apply the idea in his passage?

²³⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 75.

Depending on how John developed his idea in the text will determine how you will develop your idea based on the text.

To help the preacher develop his idea Robinson assigns a specific question to each category. For example, if the idea needs to be explained the question would be: What does this mean? If the passage indicates the biblical author is trying to prove their point the question would be: Is it true? If the passage was showing how the biblical concept was to be applied the question would be: What difference does it make? A demonstration of this concept will be applied to the five chosen texts.

Revelation 7:9-17

The developmental question for Revelation 7:9-17 is: “What does this mean?” Here are the reasons for using this question. John recognizes the confusion that may spring from transitioning in Revelation 7 from the 144,000 to the great multitude. In anticipation of this John describes the great multitude, what it consists of, what they wear and even what they carry in their hands (Revelation 7:9). He explains why they are able to stand before the throne of God in contrast to the men of the earth who question if this is possible (Revelation 7:10; 6:16, 17). Finally, John explains for his readers the origins of the great multitude in a conversation between himself and one of the 24 elders and how their robes became white (Revelation 7:13, 14).

It is clear John uses explanation as a means for developing this passage. For the preacher to develop his sermon time must be spent explaining the same concepts to his congregation.

Revelation 11:15-18

Based on the explanations offered within the passage the developmental question would be: “What does it mean?” This is based on John use of a narrative voice to explain the significance of the seventh trumpet. The explanations are given by the loud voice from heaven (Revelation 11:15) and the response of the 24 elders (Revelation 11:16-18). The passage concludes with a vision of the Ark of the Covenant (Revelation 11:19). Although no specific explanation is supplied by way of an angel, elder or other voice in Revelation 11:19 John uses OT sanctuary imagery²⁴⁰ to further emphasize the judgment message of the passage to his audience. Although it’s possible no detailed explanation was necessary for John’s original audience the best way to develop the sermon idea for today’s congregation is through explanation.

Revelation 13:1-10

John’s develops this text by showing how the dragon wages war against God’s people in the final conflict. Therefore the developmental question would ask: “Is it true?” John recognizes the animosity the dragon has against the woman’s offspring. John attempts to show in Revelation 13:1-10 the warfare used by the dragon. First, the dragon empowers a kingdom symbolized by the beast to lead the entire world into false worship (Revelation 13:1, 2). The description of the beast in Revelation 13:1, 2 should immediately clue John’s audience to refer to Daniel 7 as support for his case. Second, John distinguishes the crown worn by the beast from that of the woman. It is a crown that represents a kingdom demonstrating the beast’s power to rule and

²⁴⁰ Paulien, *The Deep Things of God*, 102. The OT imagery used in this passage would be the trumpet, the ark of the covenant along with references to the coming of God’s kingdom as referred to in Psalm 2 and Daniel 2; 7.

govern. Third, the beast speaks blasphemy. These words directed against God have religious significance. The combination of religious words and political muscle allows the beast to command everyone to worship according its decrees. Due to the number of symbols within this passage explanation will be necessary. The point John is trying to prove how the dragon will wage war against God's people.

Revelation 14:6-7

The question that develops the idea of Revelation 14:6-7 is one of application: "What difference does it make?" Because there is a purpose for preaching the everlasting gospel it is necessary to demonstrate why someone should not reject what the everlasting gospel offers to the sinner. This becomes more visible when Revelation 14:6-7 is contrasted with the content of Revelation 13. These passages reveal two kingdoms in conflict; one an earth-based religion relying on deception and force (Revelation 13); while the other is a kingdom of grace.

Although some explanation will be necessary to clarify some of the terms John uses in Revelation 14:6, 7, the primary method of developing a sermon on this passage would be to answer the question: "What difference does it make?"

Revelation 15:2-4

The developmental question for this passage is: "What does this mean?" The Song of Moses and of the Lamb is a tribute of the redeemed to God for their victory in Jesus. This song of victory is a reference to the song of Moses recorded in Exodus 15 sung after a great deliverance had been brought about by God. The text of the hymn praises God for His work describing it as "great and marvelous." In addition to

referring to the song of Moses and of the Lamb the text speaks of God's ways as being just and true. This is a reference to God's judgment of the beast and his kingdom. The text develops with references and brief explanations of God's victory for His people over the beast. This would be the best way develop a sermon on this passage.

Sermon Outlines

Revelation 7:9-17

- I. The testimony of our salvation is so powerful it can inspire worship in heaven.
 - A. Explain: John gives a description of the redeemed made up of individuals from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. They stand before throne of God dressed in white robes and waving palm branches. And when they speak—they speak as one declaring: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
 - i. Notice what takes place immediately following the testimony of the great multitude. All of heaven worships God.
 1. The angels
 2. The 24 elders
 3. The four living creatures
 - ii. They all respond with praise to God for what He has done.
 - B. Illustration: Have you ever told someone some really exciting news?
 - i. A woman who tells her best friend she just got engaged.
 - ii. A child telling their mom or dad they got an A on the math test.
 - iii. A guy who tells his buddy he got a new car for a great price.A typical response would be to rejoice with the one sharing the joyful news they personally spoke of whether it's the news of their engagement; the achievement of an outstanding grade; or a great deal on a car.
 - C. Scripture: Psalm 34:1-3—David reminds us of the power of our testimony.
 - D. Application: Some of us here may have a testimony of what God has done for them but others may not because they never knew what God could do for them.

II. The power of our testimony about God is based on what God has done for us.

A. Explain: When John was in vision he was asked by one of the elders: “Who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from? To which John replied, “Sir, you know.” And so the elder explained:

- i. These are those who’ve come out of the great tribulation.
 1. The great tribulation is earth’s final conflict described in Revelation 13:11-17 and Chapters 15-18.
- ii. They have also washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
 1. These individuals come through this conflict because their faith in what Christ has done for them at Calvary is stronger than the power of the beast.
 2. The power of their testimony is based on what God has done for them.

B. Illustrate: The strongest argument for the Gospel of Christ is the personal testimony of someone whose life has been changed by it. Charles Bradlaugh, an avowed infidel, once challenged the Rev. H. P. Hughes to a debate. The preacher, who was head of a rescue mission in London, England, accepted the challenge with the condition that he could bring with him 100 men and women who would tell what had happened in their lives since trusting Christ as their Savior. They would be people who once lived in deep sin, some having come from poverty-stricken homes caused by the vices of their parents. Hughes said they would not only tell of their conversion, but would submit to cross-examination by any who doubted their stories. Furthermore, the minister invited his opponent to bring a group of non-believers who could tell how they were helped by their lack of faith. When the appointed day arrived, the preacher came, accompanied by 100 transformed persons. But Bradlaugh never showed up. The result? The meeting turned into a testimony time and many sinners who had gathered to hear the scheduled debate were converted.²⁴¹

- i. These sinners were able to get victory over sin and the devil because by hearing the testimony of others they learned about Jesus who has power greater than sin and the devil.
- ii. The great multitude goes through the great tribulation victoriously because they washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Because of that experience they can testify before the throne of God.

C. Scripture: Luke 15:1-7—The parable in Luke’s gospel shows us the Good Shepherd is the one who looks for the sheep and brings it back.

²⁴¹ Author unknown, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/gospel.htm>; Internet; accessed 29 March 2008.

D. Application: You can have a testimony that can inspire worship in heaven by accepting what Jesus Christ has done for you.

III. Those who accept what God has done for them today will one day be with God for all eternity.

A. Explain: John describes the great multitude as serving before God's throne day and night. But he also says the one who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

i. The one who will dwell among the redeemed is Jesus.

1. Jesus already lived with us once before on this earth.
2. Jesus will live with us once again after he returns.
3. The Lamb of God will shepherd us; lead us; and God himself will wipe every tear from our eyes.
4. But if we are to be part of that experience throughout eternity we need to accept what God has done for us today.

B. Illustrate: C.S. Lewis writes: When the author walks onto the stage, the play is over. God is going to invade, all right; but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else comes crashing in? This time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. That will not be the time for choosing; It will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realized it before or not. No, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side.²⁴²

C. Scripture: Joshua 24:15—The Scriptures make it clear what we have the power of choice regarding where we want to be.

D. Application: Today is the day to recognize what God has done for you and your house and to make the choice of where you want to be for all eternity.

Revelation 11:15-19

I. One difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world is God's kingdom will last forever.

²⁴² C. S. Lewis, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/choice/htm>; Internet; accessed 27 March 2008.

- A. Explain: Throughout Bible history God and his people used trumpets.
 - i. Trumpets were used for worship—Psalm 150:3
 - ii. Trumpets were used for war—Joshua 6:4
 - iii. Trumpets were used for warning—Exodus 19:13
 - iv. Trumpets were used to announce the judgment—Leviticus 23:23-32
 - 1. When the seventh trumpet of Revelation sounds the announcement that follows makes it clear a transition has taken place: “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” Revelation 11:15
- B. Illustrate: If anyone says there’s no difference in how long the kingdoms of this world will last in comparison to the Kingdom of God then go spend an afternoon in the history section of your local library.
- C. Scripture: Daniel 2—The Bible is clear on this fact: While the kingdoms of this world will ultimately end up in the ash heap of history, the Kingdom of God will last forever.
- D. Application: What we have to do is decide if we want to part of God’s kingdom, or try to build or own kingdom either with ourselves or others.

II. But there’s more to the kingdom of God than just the fact that it lasts a long time.

- A. Explain: When the announcement of the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ the 24 elders respond by falling on their faces and worshiping God.
 - i. Why do they do this?
 - 1. Revelation 11:17 tells us the elders give thanks to God because in God’s kingdom He will reign with great power, meaning God has great ability to reign.
- B. Illustrate: Just one look at the newspaper or evening news tells us how the kingdoms of this world use their power. Some use the power of diplomacy. Some kingdoms use the power of war to advance their kingdom. But whether one kingdom uses diplomacy or war to accomplish a nation’s goals whatever means are used they all have their limits. Here lies the difference between the kingdoms of the world and God’s kingdom.
- C. Scripture: Psalm 89:14—the foundation of God’s government is justice. Mercy and truth go before His face.

D. Application: God has proven He can rule with both justice and mercy. It was at the cross of Calvary that mercy and justice kissed. Are you willing to be a part of God's kingdom where justice will be the foundation of His government?

III. We can be thankful for the arrival of God's kingdom because He will reign with power and justice.

A. Explain: Not everyone receives this news with joy and gladness.

- i. The nations respond with anger because they oppose His rule.
- ii. Because of this rebellion God's wrath is kindled and His judgment is announced.
- iii. The announcement of God's judgment promises justice. There will be rewards for the saints and prophets and those who fear God and punishment for the wicked.

B. Illustration: When I was growing up my brother and I were playing with our toy trucks with the neighbors. When it came time to go in for lunch the neighbor boy took our truck home. My mother reassured us when our father came home he would take care of the matter. That brought peace to our minds because we knew my father had the ability investigate the matter and bring about justice—getting our toys back.

C. Scripture: Revelation 20 and 21. These passages describe the rewards for the saints and prophets, and those who fear His name and the destruction of the wicked.

D. Application: What God is calling us to do in the mean time is to wait patiently.

IV. God has the ability to reign with power and justice because that is His character.

A. Explain: John's vision of the Ark of the Covenant assures his audience of who this God of justice and power is—the God of the covenant.

- i. God's ability to carry out His covenant promise is revealed in what is contained in the Ark of the Covenant—His moral law. This moral law identifies what His character is like and at the heart of His law it identifies who He is—The Lord God, creator of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

B. Illustrate: D. L. Moody once said: "Character is what we are in the dark." The good news is that the character of God is not left to speculation. His word has revealed Himself to the world as a witness.

- C. Scripture: John 14:7-9—the ultimate revelation of God’s character has been revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:1, 2
- D. Application: Because of God’s character we should not hesitate to ask God to begin preparing us to be part of His eternal kingdom.

Revelation 13:1-10

- I. The dragon’s first tactic to establishing his last-day counterfeit kingdom to employ the power of the state.
 - a. Explanation: When examining John’s description of the beast there are several points to consider that can help us better understand what John is trying to communicate regarding Satan’s last day strategy.
 - i. A beast represents a kingdom—Daniel 7:17; 8:20
 - ii. The horns of the beast represent kings—Revelation 17:12
 - iii. The word John uses to describe the crowns on the horns implies political power.
 - b. Illustration: When you read the editorial page of your local newspaper often times there are political cartoons featuring an animal as representing either a nation or organization.
 - i. A bald eagle = United States
 - ii. A lion = Great Britain
 - iii. A bear = The former Soviet Union
 - iv. An elephant = the Republican party
 - v. A donkey = the Democratic party
 - 1. John is using symbolic language to say that Satan’s counterfeit kingdom will employ the power of the state to enforce worship.
 - c. Scripture: Daniel 3 & 6 are classic stories of how Satan used the political muscle of an earthly kingdom to enforce false worship upon its citizens.
 - d. Application: When government begins to dictate to its citizens how they are to worship regardless of the circumstances the nation finds itself in, that government has adopted the character of the beast described in Rev. 13.
- II. The second tactic used by the dragon to establish his last-day counterfeit kingdom is to use blasphemy.
 - a. Explain: Blasphemy can take many forms but in the case of Rev. 13 the beast does not speak against God directly because that would make

him more visible. Satan's strategy is to use a more subtle form of blasphemy which is to claim the prerogatives of God as his own under the guise of Christian language.

- b. Illustrate: When Ronald Reagan was president he labeled the former Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire." He did so because they were the bastion of atheistic communism. The Soviet government's reputation for openly defying God and oppressing its citizens because of their religious beliefs was known throughout the world. But in today's media saturated environment any attempt by a global power to use blasphemy in order to ensnare the attention of the world must use a more subtle form. To do otherwise would invite a public relations disaster. In the case of the beast of Revelation 13 the blasphemy will be anti-Christ because it will be Christ-like in its attempt to replace Christ.
- c. Scripture: The only thing that will allow individuals to discern the true Christ from the genuine is the light of Scripture.
 - i. Both Christ & the beast are identified as beasts-Revelation 5:6/Revelation 13:1
 - ii. Both Christ & the beast begin their ministry after arising from water-Matthew 3:16/Revelation 13:1
 - iii. Christ is identified as one with His Father-John 10:30; 14:9/Beast is one with the dragon-Revelation 13:4
 - iv. Christ receives authority from His Father-Revelation 2:27/Beast receives authority from the dragon.
 - v. Both Christ & the beast wear many crowns-Revelation 19:12/Revelation 13:1
 - vi. Both Christ & the beast wield swords-Revelation 1:16/Revelation 13:10
 - vii. Christ has horns-Revelation 5:6/Beast has horns-Revelation 13:1
 - viii. Both Christ & the beast have a 3 ½ year ministry/Revelation 13:5
 - ix. Both Christ & the beast receive a mortal wound-Revelation 5:6/Revelation 13:3
 - x. Both Christ & the beast recover from their deadly wound Christ is resurrected/Beast power is brought back to life-Revelation 13:3
 - xi. Both Christ & the beast are worshiped after their resurrection-Matthew 28:17/Beast is worshiped after he is brought back to life-Revelation 13:3-4

xii. Both Christ & the beast have followers with His names on their foreheads-Revelation 14:1/Revelation 13:16²⁴³

E. Application: When the church relies on the government in order to compel the world to worship it has abandoned the gospel of salvation as the compelling reason to initiate worship.

III. The dragon's purpose for establishing a counterfeit kingdom is to lead the entire world into false worship.

- a. Explanation: From the time iniquity was found within Lucifer he has always coveted worship. But true worship originates from those who have personally experienced the salvation and deliverance of God and respond to His salvation with thanksgiving for what God has done for them. Therefore since Satan cannot provide salvation his best attempt at gaining worship must be through force which is false worship.
- b. Illustration: Just as a sound marriage cannot be built on a forced relationship so a relationship with God cannot be forced. The worship instituted by the beast power is false because it is forced. The great tragedy is that the world ends up attributing the character of Satan with that of God thinking that it is really worshiping God.
- c. Scripture: The Scripture records how Satan attempted to get Jesus to worship him by offering him all the kingdoms of the world but Jesus refused because Satan was not deserving of worship. Matthew 4:8-10
- d. Application: The only antidote to falling under the spell of the beast is the everlasting gospel. Because only the gospel can fully reveal the character of God. It is the character of God that invites us into His presence to worship Him free from compulsion.

Revelation 14:6-7

I. The everlasting gospel is the only medicine available that can turn our hearts toward heaven.

- A. Explain: The first angel's message is heaven's last warning to earth's inhabitants to prepare for Earth's final conflict.
 - i. God's kingdom has arrived—Revelation 11:15
 - ii. The nation's have responded with anger—Revelation 11:18
 - iii. History climaxes with a clash of kingdoms—Revelation 12

²⁴³ I'm indebted to Pastor Ervin Thompson who first shared these parallels between Christ and the beast during a sermon at Arizona Campmeeting in 1991 and to Dr. Ranko Stefanovic who shares them in his Commentary *Revelation of Jesus Christ* on pages 409.

- iv. The final rebellion is demonstrated when the nations of the earth institute false worship—Revelation 13
 - v. The purpose of the everlasting gospel is to turn the inhabitants of earth from a man-based religion to a heaven-bound faith.
- B. Illustration: The truth of the matter is while we live in a graveyard we ask the question: Where is God in all of this? Although the Bible says: “Men’s hearts fail them for fear of what is coming upon the earth,” God is not silent.
- C. Scripture: Romans 5:6-11—The gospel is the good news of what God has done for us before we even knew we needed the good news.
- D. Application: What God is looking for is a response to what He’s already accomplished for us.

II. The everlasting gospel is intended to awaken us to the presence of God in our lives.

- A. Explain: The appeal is made to fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment has come.
 - i. We need to recognize God’s eyes are upon us. God longs for our hearts to turn heavenward and enter into fellowship with Him.
 - ii. To give glory to God is to walk in His commandments because we’ve entered into fellowship with Him.
 - iii. To say we love God but follow after the world is hypocrisy.
- B. Illustration: Have you ever heard the phrase: “Actions speak louder than words.” When a couple gets married they do so because they’re in love. The man does not court his wife by asking her what she will do for him. Or the woman asking him what he’ll do for her. As their love grows and the relationship deepens they come to understand each other so well they do what pleases the other person because they love that individual. How they treat each other testifies of their love for that individual.
- C. Scripture: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14—the wise man tells us how we are live in light of the judgment.
- D. Application: God is calling us to walk in His ways because we have responded to the claims of the everlasting gospel.

III. The purpose of preaching the everlasting gospel is to turn the inhabitants of earth from a man-based religion to a heaven-bound faith.

- A. Explain: The everlasting gospel is the catalyst that re-orients us back to our Creator.
 - i. None of us were around when God created the world.
 - ii. But because of the power we experience when we encounter the gospel of Jesus Christ we recognize that since God is powerful enough to make the drunk sober, and the liar honest then by faith we can believe all the other claims made by God in Scripture. This would include the belief that God created the world in six days. Because God is our Creator and our re-Creator He alone is worthy of worship. This idea stands out in stark contrast with the claims of the beast who forces the world to worship the dragon.
- B. Illustration: When I was about 6 years old my parents took the family to Arizona on vacation. While we were there we stopped to see the Grand Canyon. At the south rim of the canyon there's a bronze plaque explaining the origins of the canyon. The plaque says the canyon was created millions of years ago by the Colorado River. My father read the plaque to me as I stood there at the edge of the canyon and looking down at the Colorado River snaking its way through the canyon. And all I could think of in my six year old mind was "No way!" I didn't believe it then and I don't believe it now. The difference between now and then is that now I have a relationship with the Creator who made the heavens, earth and sea in six literal days and it's because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- C. Scripture: Exodus 31:13-17—God has given His people the Sabbath as a sign of His sanctifying power.
- D. Application: Because God wants to bring us back to Eden restored we are invited to remember our Creator by observing the seventh-day Sabbath.

Revelation 15:2-4

- I. Sometimes words alone cannot fully capture the experiences of this life.
 - A. Explain: Those who stand on the sea of glass are described as holding harps of God.
 - i. The harp—like any instrument is used at times to accompany words put to music for worship and praise.
 - ii. Those standing on the sea of glass have just come through a tremendous experience and need music to be able to help tell their story.

B. Illustrate: Let me illustrate this by first reading the words to this song in the church hymnal: #624 I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey
I want Jesus to walk with me²⁴⁴

Now let me recite the words again this time with music.

C. Scripture: James 5:13b—Words accompanied by music is one of the chief ways of expressing our joys.

D. Application: There are times when we experience the victory of God in our lives and words will never be enough to fully express what God has done for us.

II. When a Christian sings their song of victory it's sung in recognition of what God has done for them.

A. Explain: The song sung by those standing on the sea of glass is a song of victory: The song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb

- i. The victory experienced by Moses at the Red Sea is a type of victory God's people will experience after going through the planet Earth's final conflict.
 - 1. Just as the children of Israel were delivered from the oppressive power of Pharaoh so God's people at the end of earth's history will be delivered from the oppressive power of the beast.
 - a. God's people choose to remain faithful to Him even under the threat of death.
 - b. As a result of their victory they sing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb in recognition of what God has done for them.

B. Illustration: Have you ever heard the fans sing at the end of a football game when their team is winning by a lopsided score and little time remaining? They sing: "We will, We will rock you!" They sing that song even though their jerseys aren't splattered with mud and blood. They sing on behalf of the team they're associated with because the team gave the fans the victory.

C. Scripture: Psalm 40:1-3—David speaks of a personal victory God has given to him.

²⁴⁴ Arr. Eurydice Osterman, "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me," *Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985), #624.

D. Application: What victory has God given you that you need to sing about? Maybe you have no victory song because you don't have God.

1. Are you willing to let the Lamb of God be your Shepherd?
 - a. It was his sacrifice that paid the price of your sins and mine
 - b. There will be no victory over sin without the one who can deliver us from our sin.
 - c. When we have that victory we'll have a song to sing.

Conclusion

Although Revelation is the last book of the Bible, this effort will not be the last on Revelation. This is only one small piece of a greater work. But throughout the length of this project my hope and prayer has been to see it become another step toward helping preachers proclaim the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Only time will tell of my success. But in the mean time more work needs to be done. I share the following thought to encourage my colleagues to be faithful to this task:

The book of Revelation opens with an injunction to us to understand the instruction that it contains. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,” God declares, “and keep those things which are

written therein: for the time is at hand.” When we as a people understand what this book means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival. We do not understand fully the lessons that it teaches, notwithstanding the injunction given us to search and study it.²⁴⁵

I fully recognize the challenges of preaching the book of Revelation, yet I am encouraged to move forward by the promises within its pages. With God’s help we can preach the whole counsel of God.

APPENDIX A: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

The structural analysis of the selected passages begins on the next page in order to give them the maximum space necessary for their display.

²⁴⁵ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Boise: Pacific Press, 1962), 113.

Revelation 7:9-17
NKJV

After these things I looked,

[and]
behold,

a great multitude which no one could number,

of all nations,
[and]
tribes,
peoples
[and]
tongues,

standing
[before] the throne
[and]
[before] the Lamb,

clothed with white robes,
with palm branches in their hands

[and]
crying out with a loud voice saying,

“Salvation (belongs) to our God who sits on the throne,
[and]
to the Lamb!”

All the angels stood around the throne

[and]
the elders
[and]
the four living creatures,

[and]
fell on their faces before the throne
[and]
worshipped God,

saying:

“Amen!
Blessing
[and]
glory
[and]

wisdom,
thanksgiving
[and]
honor
[and]
power
[and]
might,
(Be) to our God forever
[and]
forever.
Amen."

[Then]
one of the elders answered,

saying to me,
“Who are these arrayed in white robes,
[and]
where did they come from?”

[and]
I said to him,
“Sir, you know.”

So he said to me,
“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation,
[and]
washed their robes
[and]
made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

“[Therefore]
they are [before] the throne of God,
[and]
serve Him day
[and]
night
in His temple.

[and]
He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

“They shall neither hunger anymore
[nor]
thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,

[nor]
any heat
[for] the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them
[and]
lead them
to living fountains of waters.

[and]

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 11:15-19

NKJV

[Then] the seventh angel sounded:

[and]

there were loud voices in heaven saying,

“The kingdoms of this world have become the (kingdoms) of our Lord

[and]

of his Christ

[and] He shall reign forever

[and]

ever!”

[and]

the twenty-four elders who sat [before] God on their thrones

fell on their faces

[and]

worshipped God,

saying:

“We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty

The One who is

[and]

who was

[and]

who is to come

[Because] You have taken Your great power

[and]

reigned.

The nations were angry,

[and]

Your wrath has come,

[and]

the time of the dead,

[that] they should be judged,

[and]

[that] You should reward your servants the prophets

[and]

the saints,

[and]

those who fear your name,

small
[and]
great,
[and]
[and]
should destroy those who destroy the earth."

[Then] the temple of God was opened in heaven,
[and]
the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple,
[and]
there were lightnings,
noises,
thunderings,
an earthquake,
[and]
great hail.

Revelation 13:1-10

NKJV

[Then] I stood on the sand of the sea.

[and] I saw a beast rising up out of the sea,
having seven heads
[and]
ten horns
[and] on his heads
a blasphemous name.

now the beast which I saw was like a leopard,
his feet were like the feet of a bear
[and]
his mouth like the mouth of a lion.

The dragon gave him his power,
his throne,
[and]
great authority.

[And (I saw) one of his heads
[as if] it had been mortally wounded,
[and]
his deadly wound was healed.
[and]
all the world marveled
[and]
followed the beast.

So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast;
[and]
they worshiped the beast,
saying,
Who is like the beast?
Who is able to make war with him?

[And] he was given a mouth speaking great things
[and]
blasphemies,
[and]

he was given authority to continue
[for] forty-two months.

[Then] he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God,
to blaspheme His name,
His tabernacle,
[and]
those who dwell in heaven.

It was granted to him to make war with the saints
[and]
to overcome them.
[and]
authority was given him over every tribe,
tongue
[and]
nation.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him,

whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb

slain from the
foundation
of the world.

If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity;
He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword

Here is the patience
[and]
the faith of the saints.

Revelation 14:6-7
NKJV

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven,

Having the everlasting gospel

to preach to those who dwell on the earth

to every nation,
tribe,
tongue,
[and]
people

saying with a loud voice,

“Fear God
[and]
give glory to Him,
[for] the hour of His judgment has come;
[and]
worship Him
who made heaven
[and]
earth,
the sea
[and]
springs of water.”

Revelation 15:2-4
NKJV

[and] I saw (something)

[like] a sea of glass mingled with fire,
[and]

those who have the victory over the beast,
over his image

[and]
over his mark

[and]
over the number of his name,

standing on the sea of glass,
having harps of God.

They sing the song of Moses,
the servant of God,

[and]
of the Lamb

saying:

“Great
[and]

marvelous

(are) Your works,
Lord God Almighty!

Just

[and]
true

(are) Your ways,
O King of the saints!

Who shall not fear You,

O Lord,

[and]
glorify Your name?

[For] you alone
(are) holy

[For] all nations shall come
[and]

worship
[before] you

[For] Your judgments have been manifested."

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project Survey

Hello, my name is Tom Dombrowski and I'm a Doctor of Ministry student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I'm enrolled in the Preacher and the Message track. I'm working on my thesis which will examine preaching expository sermons in the book of Revelation beyond chapters two and three. For part of my research I'm conducting a survey of Doctor of Ministry students from Gordon-Conwell who have gone through either the *Preacher and the Message* or *Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible* tracks.

I'm very excited about what I will learn from this project. In order for the survey to be a success I need as many participants as possible. I know your time is valuable, but I need your help. Please fill out the survey by circling the appropriate answer or filling in the blank with your response. The survey should take no longer than 30 minutes.

I want your answers to remain confidential so, please, do not fill in your name. The data will be averaged in with the other participants so no one will be able to identify your answer. *Due to time constraints the surveys need to be returned no later than March 31.*

If you would like a copy of the survey results I would be happy to e-mail you one. Please send your request via e-mail to nutmegts@earthlink.net. If you'd like one snail-mailed, please send a SASE with a request to the following address:

Attn: Tom Dombrowski
350 Brown Street
Winchendon, MA 01475

Thank you for your cooperation!

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Please identify your age category: 25-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60-Up
3. How many years have you been preaching in pastoral ministry? _____
4. Please identify in the space provided the year you graduated with your Doctor of Ministry from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. _____
5. Should every sermon be Christ-centered? Yes No
6. Is a Christ-centered sermon different than a Theo-centric sermon? Yes No
7. Please identify the answer that best describes your interpretation of the book of Revelation.
Preterist Historicist Futurist Idealist Other _____
8. Please identify the term that best describes your interpretation of the second coming of Jesus in conjunction with the millennium.
Premillennialist Postmillennialist Amillennialist
9. Is it essential to have a specific opinion of the millennium in order to preach from the book of Revelation? Yes No
10. Have you ever preached on the seven churches found in Revelation chapters two and three? Yes No
11. If you answered yes to question #10, were these expository sermons? Yes No
12. If you answered yes to question #10, was this before you entered the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell? Yes No
13. Have you ever preached from the book of Revelation beyond chapters two and three?
Yes No
14. If you answered yes to question #13, was this preaching event after you finished your Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell? Yes No
15. If you answered yes to question #13, how many sermons did you preach?
1-3 4-6 7-9 10 or more
16. If you answered yes to question #13, were these expository sermons? Yes No
17. If you answered yes to question #13, was there a particular theme to your sermons?
Yes No

18. If you answered yes to question #17, can you please identify this theme briefly in the space provided below? (*Please use the back of this page if you need more space.*)

For questions #19 – 22 please use the *Likert* scale to respond to the questions

1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree

19. Would you agree that *worship* is a theme in Revelation? 1 2 3 4 5

20. Would you agree a Christ-centered sermon would consist of revealing one or more of the following?

The person of Jesus Christ 1 2 3 4 5

The work of Jesus Christ 1 2 3 4 5

The teaching of Jesus Christ 1 2 3 4 5

21. Would you agree a sermon is still Christ-centered if it brings out the redemptive work of God without specifically mentioning the person, work, or teaching of Jesus Christ?

1 2 3 4 5

22. If you have preached outside of *Revelation chapters two and three* to what degree did the following categories *challenge* your preaching?

The genre of literature of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

The grammar of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

The literary structure of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

The symbols used in the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

The terminology used in the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

The theology of the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

The use of the Old Testament in the book of Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

For question #23 please use the following *Likert* scale to complete your answer.

1=None; 2=Little influence; 3= Some; 4=Considerable influence; 5=Strongly influenced

23. If you have preached outside of *Revelation chapters two and three* to what degree did the following categories *influence* your choice of preaching texts?

Curiosity of church members about Revelation 1 2 3 4 5

Current events in the social/natural/political world 1 2 3 4 5

Lectionary 1 2 3 4 5

Personal study of Revelation beyond chapters 2 & 3 1 2 3 4 5

Other: _____ 1 2 3 4 5

Thank you very much for filling out this survey!

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VITA

Thomas Dombrowski was born on June 12, 1964, in Parma, Ohio, the third of four children born to Ted and Rose Marie Dombrowski. He grew up in Middleburg Heights, Ohio and was raised in the Roman Catholic faith. At age 15 his family moved to Tempe, Arizona where he graduated from Marcos de Niza High School in 1982. After high school he attended Mesa Community College and later transferred to Arizona State University, graduating in the spring of 1988, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Instrumental Music Education. He taught four years in the Tempe Union High School District as a guitar instructor. In May, 1987, Tom accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. On Christmas Eve, 1988, he was baptized and became a member of the Tempe Seventh-day Adventist Church. After his baptism Tom experienced a growing conviction to enter the pastoral ministry. In the spring of 1992, he began his training for the gospel ministry at Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. After graduating in 1995 with his Master of Divinity degree he received a call to be a Bible worker in the Wickford and Johnston Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Rhode Island. In August, 1996, Tom became the pastor of the Wickford and Johnston Churches. In January, 1999, Tom moved to Connecticut to pastor the Danbury-Bethel, Waterbury, and Plainville Seventh-day Adventist Churches. While serving in Connecticut he assisted in starting up congregations in Hartford and Naugatuck. Currently he is the pastor of the Fitchburg and Gardner Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Massachusetts. Tom is married to Sandra Dawn Covell. They have two sons, Adam and Andrew. Tom began his studies at Gordon-Conwell in May, 2002 and plans to graduate in May, 2008.